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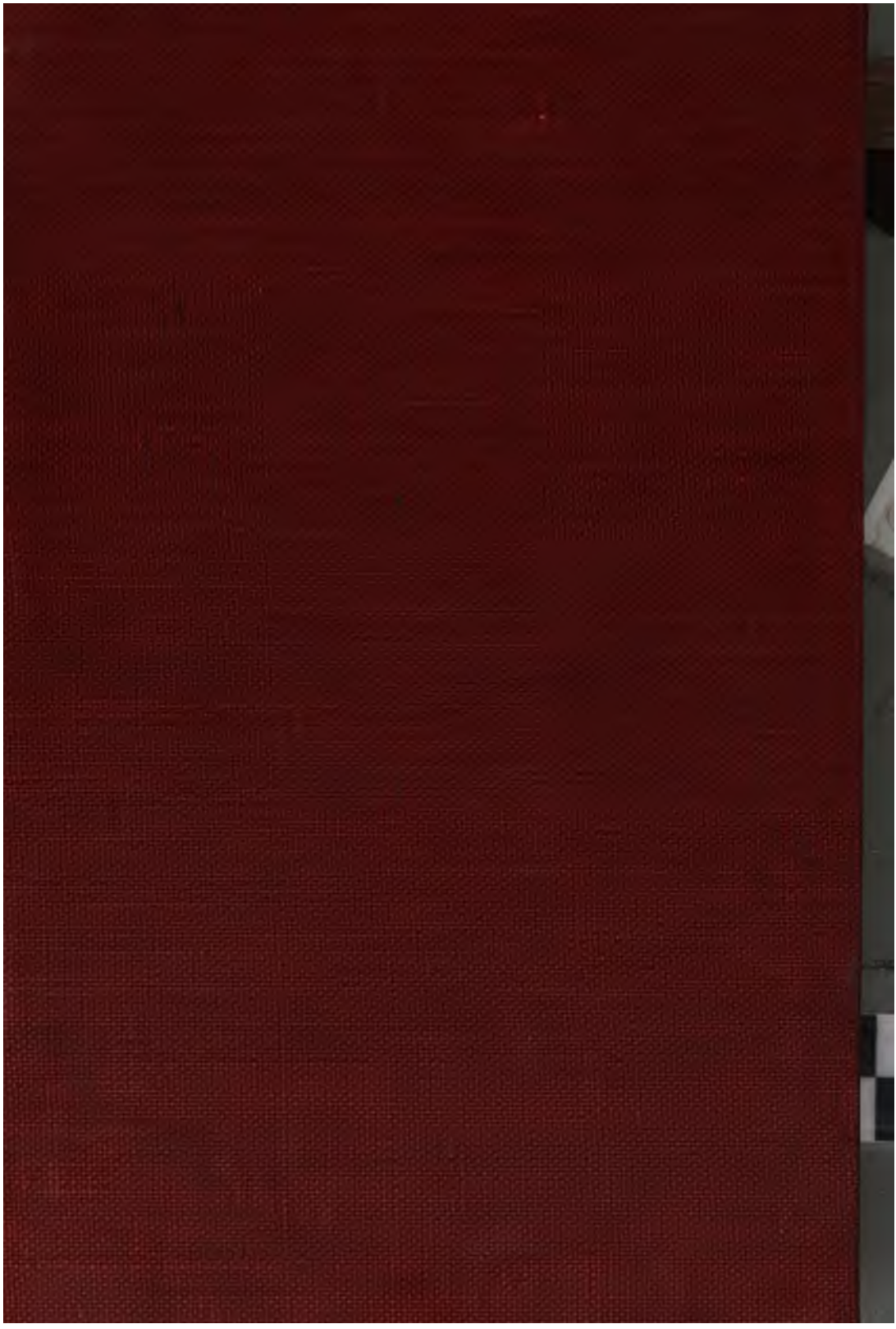

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THE WORKS

OF

ALPHONSE DAUDET

LIMITED EDITION

XX.

MONDAY TALES

Of the LIMITED EDITION of Alphonse Daudet
one thousand copies have been printed
for America.

This copy is Number 191

THE WORKS OF

ALPHONSE DAUDET

MONDAY TALES

TRANSLATED BY

MARIAN McINTYRE

ILLUSTRATED BY ADRIEN MOREAU

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TO MY DEAR

ERNEST DAUDET

[redacted]

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

THERE are offspring of genius that start upon a separate existence of their own, without sponsors, quite independent of their paternity, of which they make no betrayal that may throw light upon the relation which must always exist between the man of letters and his art. On the whole, very few are the works in English that possess an autobiographical flavor. Our greatest men are strangely silent about themselves. A dumb devil of incommunicableness and reticence possesses them. Interrogate their writings, and these scarcely answer, or answer at times in a half-shamefaced, halting, and awkward fashion, as if to talk of one's self at all were, in some sort, a deadly sin. This reserve is perhaps inseparable from a race that regards literature as a most serious profession, mere *causerie* in print as a trivial thing, but it springs more naturally from the conviction that, however a man's work may belong to mankind, his life belongs to himself alone, not to the afterworld, is a thing of value to no one save himself, — that curiosity on the part of the public is an intrusion. Genius, especially English genius, decrees for itself a strangely isolated path.

Our Gallic brother, on the contrary, recognizes that, once the children of his brain have seen the light of day, he has indeed given "hostages" to Fame, and accepts good-humoredly the inevitable consequences, assumes the fact that the world is henceforth interested in him, regards its curiosity not as an impertinent emotion, but a most laudable one, deserving to be gratified. He realizes, too, that not the most kindly, intelligent, and grateful of all critics among his posterity shall ever be able to throw a more brilliant and sympathetic light upon an author's life and work and leanings than he himself can. Nor does he consider a playful naïve egotism incompatible with the dignity of a littérateur. Hugo, Dumas, Daudet, are merely instances of that which is so peculiarly a French characteristic. If the Saxon is a nation of conquerors, the French is peculiarly a nation of talkers; and literature, after all, is merely conversation in print, a delightful monologue, where the writer's public is also his friend.

The Frenchman, whether he writes merely for the Parisian, for France, or for a still larger republic, is *en rapport* with his public, and assumes it is interested in himself. Hence the spontaneity and charm of what he has to say, often one of manner, rather than of matter. Is he his own biographer? Then his artistic sense will save him from sins against good taste. He suppresses here, adds a touch there, is nowhere too literal. His the power to embellish, ornament facts, interweave fancies, interpolate just that element of the picturesque,

the fabulous, which adds flavor. Always an enemy to dull literalness, in order to entertain you he merely begs that you will not take him too seriously. He does not ask you to believe all he tells you, or to probe too minutely, merely to discover just how much is fact, and what is fiction. You may smile at him, and he is not offended, for often a smile at his own expense has anticipated yours. And if at times he seems to wear the cap and bells of a jester, his real mood is perhaps too sad for weeping. A laugh may lurk behind the tear; the tear quite as often hides beneath the smile. This was at times the charm of Heine's prose, its wit and humor, at best, more French than German; the charm of Jean Paul's, — the Midas touch that poetizes minor miseries and petty pains. This, too, is the quality of Daudet's Short Stories.

Yet Daudet was a realist. He wrote of little that had not come under his observation, was all his life a laborious taker of notes. *Fromont Jeune, The Nabob, Jack, Sapho,* — these are contemporary studies, realistic enough, of life as he saw it. The background is ever a familiar one.

But it is true that in these longer works the personal note is rarely struck. The realist was also too much an artist to confound the office of biographer and of novelist.

And that is why — to the student for whom life and literature are inseparable — Daudet's longer novels are not the most interesting of his works, since there is always a certain fascination in seeking behind names and titles and events that un-

known quantity, the writer himself, — a delight in the book about which clings the delicate perfume of a personality not purely fictitious. As we love to trace those resemblances, real or fancied, of children to their parents, so we delight in those mannerisms of a writer peculiarly his own, — those confidences, stray bits of information that reveal the man through his writings.

In some few of his works, not the longer ones, Daudet has left the reader this legacy, about which lingers the charm of all dear, personal, familiar things. In *Le Petit Chose*, *Souvenirs d'un Homme de Lettres*, in *Trente Ans de Paris*, it is Daudet who speaks. *Le Petit Chose* is the narrative of a youth not as yet quite sure of himself. Its very strength is also its weakness. As Daudet himself said, "At twenty-five one is scarcely mature enough to review and annotate his own life!" In the *Souvenirs* and in *Thirty Years of Paris*, the personal note is struck again, but this time in stronger, manlier fashion, by a man sure of himself, his art. In *Lettres de mon Moulin* and *Contes du Lundi* are the intermediate experiences that bridge the gap between the dreams of a youth of twenty and the maturer views and soberer vision of the man of fifty.

Reading these chapters of Daudet's life written by himself, one almost wishes that every man of letters might be his own biographer — and with a touch as kindly and tolerant of himself and others as was Alphonse Daudet. It is a loving, altogether lovable personality that is revealed to us in *The Letters from my Mill* and *The Monday Tales.*

Little What 's His Name grown a few years older, that is all; still the Child of Provence, impulsive, warm-hearted, — a child who has not yet outgrown his fondness for playing at Crusoe; though he has parted with Friday and the parrot, he is still a solitary Robinson with all Paris for his Desert Island.

It is Little What 's His Name whose voice is heard again in *The Monday Tales* in a strain as prophetic as tender when he stands at the bedside of a dead friend: —

"It was heartrending to gaze at the lifeless head, drooping so heavily upon the pillow, asleep in death, while at his side lay that book which so soon would be seen in the shop-windows; whose title passers-by would read mechanically, and carry away in the memory, vividly impressed there, with the name of its author inscribed now upon that sadder leaf of the city's register, — that name whose letters looked so gay upon the cover, the cover still fresh, unfaded. The entire problem of the soul and the body was there: that rigid corpse would so soon be given to earth and forgotten; while the book, starting forth on its life apart from him, like a visible soul, was full of vitality, and perhaps a thing immortal."

With the shock of Daudet's death still fresh in the memory, the title of his *Last Book* still ringing in the ears, the words have a deeper significance than before. "The least page he has ever written will preserve the vibration of his soul as long as our language shall exist," said Zola at the grave of Daudet. Strong and deep words from

the grim realist whose theories of life and art seem often so opposed to his own. Did Daudet anticipate this verdict in *The Last Book?*

Whether so or not, no more lasting legacy to the French language than the various series of short stories which appeared from time to time during the middle period of his life in Paris. Had he written not another line, his place in literature would have been assured. For each of these stories bears the stamp of a classic, is a book in miniature. Nothing more finished, more perfect, in literary form than these *contes*, — not even the prose of De Maupassant. For De Maupassant's short stories are prose always, prose of the cruellest, bitterest sort, which cuts, sears, corrodes, — art indeed for art's sake, but stripped of every generous illusion. Cruel motive, mean thought, ignoble desire, are so often the theme of him who has penned the most perfect prose ever written. The short stories of Daudet, on the contrary, are poems in prose.

Daudet is not an optimist through indifference or ignorance, but through conviction. He saw as plainly as did De Maupassant the frailty and meanness and misery of life. His ear was equally sensitive to every strain of the world's minor music; yet, after all, it is a world of rich and generous emotions Daudet would have us believe. Life is a goodly thing. The sunshine — how blessed a gift! The peasant's rags need not of necessity hide a beggar's soul. For Daudet, thought has wings. The convulsive heaving of a shawl above

the poor, thin shoulders it covers but scantily, is sufficient to reveal to him all the domestic tragedy of a simple bourgeoise. A mere pantomime of the street, a little dumb show as expressive as the pantomime of two of Seraphin's marionettes, often suggests to him a drama of the hearth.

Daudet was, in a certain sense, the pioneer of the modern Short Story in France. The *conte*, the *nouvelle*, has indeed been the special inheritance of the descendants of the Latins, and in France the short story is centuries old.

Yet with Daudet the short story acquired a new, purely modern significance. He was perhaps the first to apply this form of literary art to a passing phase of thought, to a momentary emotion, and to incidents that are psychological in character, rather than anecdotic. *La Comédie Humaine* Balzac called that tremendous drama prolonged through volume after volume. *Une chronique humaine*, Daudet might have called those short stories extending over some of the best, most productive years of his life, — a human chronicle of contemporary life and manners, on a humbler, far less pretentious scale than Balzac's Comedy, — yet a chronicle that appeals to all classes, finds its subjects among all classes, and even among the *déclassé*. The Paris *ouvrier*, the little bourgeois, the poet, the Academician, agas, Turkos, provincials, all are familiar figures for Daudet. And note how every superfluous detail, every repetition, is brushed away. Never a phrase too much. Each sketch is as clear-cut as a cameo, upon whose brilliant back-

ground stands in fine, bold relief the figure, the event, he wishes to describe.

"Un peu trop de papier, mon fils!" says Flaubert after a perusal of *Jack*. This charge cannot be brought against the short stories. Each is complete in itself, and contains material that, if amplified, might serve for many a novel or drama.

Yet how slight in themselves are often the details of the story. A mere newspaper clipping, a chance paragraph, no more. And yet so much of life is made up of the seemingly insignificant happenings. Daudet rarely deals with the exceptional, rarely descends to extravagance or caricature in his portrayals of character. It is in the average, ordinary, seemingly commonplace man and woman that he frequently finds all the elements of a tragedy, a domestic drama. Here at least he is one with the realists, with Tourguénef, Zola, Tolstoi, Ibsen. But he differs from them all as completely as the atmosphere of his own sunburned Provence differs from the cold, gray dawn of a winter morning in Paris. He touches commonplace events to transfigure them; he does not see life through rose-hued spectacles, but he views many things through the luminous, tender mist of fancy. For the great man who reads life deeply, the humblest, least important event is full of solemn significance, the smallest life holds in itself, potentially, the elements of the sublimest drama, the profoundest tragedy.

It was this deep, underlying sense of the vast possibilities of life that made Daudet's mirth a far different thing from the humor of Dickens.

Daudet's mirth is sometimes scarcely more than a suppressed trembling of the muscles, his humor as delicate as the quiver of a butterfly's wing. It springs from subtler perceptions of the incongruous, the ludicrous, than those which made Dickens a popular idol. Daudet states often from a humorous standpoint a truth that has a deeper side, but the smile is scarcely more than a ripple of the surface. A wave may break into innumerable, tiny flowers of foam, but the deep undercurrent remains unchanged. Daudet's humor is never the Gargantuan laugh.

The short stories are Daudet at his best, a style tense, virile, full of suppressed energy. The pictures he sees are clearly conveyed to the mental retina, and focused there. His sense of color and form is at times as vivid and keen as Gautier's. Sometimes he lays on the colors broadly, again with all the minuter delicacy of touch. He has always the painter's instinct for a fitting background which shall bring his figures into relief.

In a charming chapter of *Thirty Years of Paris*, Daudet has given us the story of his *Letters from my Mill*. Concerning *The Monday Tales* he has said little. Possibly this is because they are somewhat of the nature of isolated sketches, not bound together by one central idea. Possibly they had not, in his view, the scope and value of the longer works, yet it is true that they helped to build that solid structure of Daudet's reputation, and are as finished in workmanship as anything he has ever written.

The Monday Tales first appeared as occasional contributions to *Figaro*. A portion of them were brought into volume-form in 1871, and published under the title of *Lettres à un Absent*, dedicated to Daudet's poet-friend, Paul Arène, a captain of the Mobiles.

In 1873, all the stories were brought together and then published under the title of *Les Contes du Lundi*. The story entitled *The Three Low Masses* has also appeared in *Letters from my Mill*. Those which originally formed part of the *Lettres à un Absent* are *The Mothers*, *At the Outposts*, *Country-folk in Paris*, *The Boy Spy*, *Bélisaire's Prussian*, *The Defence of Tarascon*, *The Siege of Berlin*, and *The Clock of Bougival*, published originally as *Our Clocks*.

The writer was a man of more than thirty, to whom success had come, who had found his public. The events of the Franco-Prussian War had sobered him, and given a new tinge of earnestness to his work.

There is a nobler strain in these stories than speaks from the pages of *Le Petit Chose*, — the ring of passionate patriotism, no longer the voice of Provence, or of Paris, but the voice of France.

These stories, offered to the most captious of editors who has ever catered to the most capricious of publics, were polished and repolished with the utmost care before they reached the columns of *Le Figaro*. In *Thirty Years of Paris*, Daudet has left his impressions of De Villemessant, the terrible ogre of *Figaro*, who after numerous disastrous

literary enterprises, the last of which had been suppressed by the police at the time of the famous *coup-d'état*, was devoting all his energies to the exploitation of the novelty in literature, everything most *article* among literary wares bearing the genuine stamp *article de Paris*. De Villemessant would not seem as unusual a figure to-day as at the time when Daudet first met him. Ernest Daudet, in *Mon Frère et Moi*, has described his brother's relations with him. Daudet has related with what trembling he committed to the letter-box of *Figaro* that delightful, fantastic, symbolic thing, the *Romance of Little Red Riding Hood*, which first attracted the ogre's attention, and caused him to recognize the appearance of a new force in literature.

Fortunate for Daudet that so early in his career he found favor in the eyes of this formidable character. True, the connection with *Figaro* brought him no great pecuniary gain: money did not come in very fast; and the author of *Little Red Riding-hood's Romance* had not a few unromantic, very realistic interviews with a very grim Wolf. At this time he had quitted the dismal attic in the Grand Hôtel du Senat; but the garret was none too warm, in which he sat muffled in an old blanket writing for *Figaro*. And yet he was assured of a public, and a public to which he was compelled to give nothing but his best.

To return to *The Monday Tales*. Roughly classified, they fall into three divisions, — those which are autobiographical, in the nature of remi-

niscence; those which are chronicles, bird's eye pictures of contemporaneous events; and those which are more purely imaginative and fantastic. They have been classified in this volume as fantasy and history, — caprices and souvenirs. The line that separates fact from fiction must not be drawn too closely. Daudet, like all artists, took occasional liberties with history, modified here, altered slightly there, — as in the *Battle of Père-La-Chaise* and the story of *Les Petiets Pâtés*. Nor is it always easy to say how far fiction mingles with fact in these stories. Such stories as *The Siege of Paris*, *The Mothers*, are stamped with the spirit of truth, with a vitality which makes one forget to inquire how literally they may be true. Occasionally the use of coincidences seems a little overdrawn, as in *The Siege of Berlin*, where the death of the old cuirassier, simultaneous with the entry of the Germans into Paris, savors just a trifle of the melodramatic and improbable. But, after all, *The Siege of Paris* had not a little of melodrama mingled with its tragedy, and no fiction could seem more extravagant than much of the truth concerning it. In the death of Chauvin, "the Last Frenchman," we have grim, sad truth regarding the siege, — truth, however, from the standpoint of an eye-witness, who, in spite of the fact that he was a minor actor in the drama, never lost his power of viewing events from the standpoint of a disinterested outsider.

The touching story, *La Dernière Classe*, might have come from the lips of an Alsatian, so true is

it to the spirit of Alsace during those sorrowful days that followed the Franco-Prussian War.

The part that Daudet played in this war it is not necessary to dwell upon here, except to emphasize the value it gives to those historic sketches in the *Contes du Lundi*, which relate to the siege of Paris. The narration of an eye-witness of events while history is in process of making has always a significance far beyond that possessed by the commentary of the most brilliant historian, who must rewrite history from musty archives. When the eye-witness is Alphonse Daudet, the value of the chronicle is still greater. A man with a passion for new scenes and events, whose mental notes were copious, keen, and accurate; a man who sees a thousand subtile, impalpable things that escape coarser powers of vision, who possesses the rare gift of using words with such exactness that others can see with his eyes, pictures so vivid they need but little by way of text, — such an eye-witness of the Siege of Paris cannot fail to make valuable contributions to its history. With a good map of Paris and its fortifications, and these historical sketches of *The Monday Tales*, the general reader may glean more of the actual events of the siege than from many a history.

The first days and weeks of the Terrible Year, the life at the outposts, the subsequent days of the Commune, — all are touched upon. Needless perhaps to say that Daudet had small sympathy with the events and leaders of the Commune, and left Paris during those troublous days.

In that mighty upheaval of Paris which brought so many turbid elements to the surface,—that drama wherein the ludicrous so often jostles the tragic, the profound, — Daudet's perceptions of the farcical and incongruous are as keen as his perception of the noble, the pathetic, and heroic. He sees Paris as Englishmen have seen and described it during the siege. No unprejudiced, impartial outsider ever saw the inherent weak points of French life and character more keenly than he. Politics he hated. Officialism, though he had studied it from the inside, possessed no glamour for him. He dared to describe things as he saw them, yet the patriotic note in his writings is as strong as the critical and ironic. Daudet is French indeed in his seeming inability to understand the conquering Teuton. His prejudice at times moves a smile. It is so naïve, so intensely Parisian, that contempt for a conqueror who could not even pronounce the language of the vanquished! He can see only grossness, coarseness, and ignorance, in "Attila encamped about Paris." He regards the Berlinese with all the inbred repugnance of a Parisian *élégant.* So De Montpavan, had he outlived his Duke long enough, might have lamented the utter absence of *Tenue* — on the part of the conqueror. Bulwer-Lytton, in his novel of "The Parisians," sees the German from quite another than the Gallic standpoint.

The tremendous principles at work beneath that invasion of France, the iron, inexorable energy of the Great Chancellor, the mighty forces back of

the movement, — if Daudet realized anything of these things, he does not let us suspect the fact. Possibly he did understand far better than he lets us believe in *Les Contes du Lundi*. Possibly if he could speak, his last word concerning the Teuton would be something profounder than the delicate raillery of *The Clock of Bougival*, or the less kindly satire of *The Blind Emperor*.

The siege of Paris left its ineffaceable influence upon Daudet's life. The war of 1870 was for him a revelation, writes Léon Daudet. *At the Outposts* and *My Kepi* contain some of his personal recollections of the days of the siege.

With the exception of the sketches relating to the siege, the stories in this volume which are reminiscences of the writer are not many. *The Pope is Dead* contains recollections of Daudet's childhood. Readers of *Le Petit Chose* will remember the sale of the factory, and the heartbreak of Little Crusoe at seeing his desert island transformed. Shortly afterward, the Daudet family removed to Lyons, exchanging its fog and gloom for their beloved Nîmes. Alphonse found delight and consolation upon the river. To spend long afternoons upon it he played truant again and again, the motherly Ernest shielding the younger brother from blame. When reports of the boy's absence were sent home, Ernest would intercept them and answer them in his father's name. Often he would aid the younger in inventing excuses, privately lecturing the little brother, who, in the deep contrition of the moment, would solemnly promise

never to sin again. The imagination of Ernest was not always equal to the strain of inventing these repeated excuses, but the imaginative powers of the future author of *Tartarin* never failed him, and upon one occasion he tells us he actually invented the death of the visible Head of the Church to divert from himself the suspicions of that dear mother, — no Roman of them all more devout Roman Catholic than she. And, most startling fact, the ingenious young Provençal, the future father of Tartarin, was so deeply overcome by the emotion which his story had called forth that on the sorrowful evening, when, seated about the table, the family recalled the history of popes past and present, he almost came to believe his own invention. Those who love to think that the child is father to the man will see in this young méridional the promise of the novelist who describes the feats of his lion-hunting countryman with such sympathetic and loving irony of soul; and the very, very good people will remember that in the south of France the Lie is not regarded too seriously, and that, indeed, all France is *un peu de Tarascon.*

In *The Caravansary* and in *Decorated the 15th of August* we have detached pages from Daudet's notes taken during his journey in Algeria.

In 1861 the evil effects of the privations Daudet had endured since his coming to Paris, four years before, began to manifest themselves. He fell seriously ill. De Morny, who had no little fondness for his young *attaché du cabinet,* sent for him, and gave him leave of absence to travel. "I must ap-

point you sub-prefect somewhere in the South," he said graciously. "You are very young, and you will not cut your hair, but that will not matter." And he sent him, at the doctor's suggestion, to Algeria, with money to defray the expenses of the tour. New and picturesque surroundings, novelty of scenery, the rich and brilliant coloring of the picture, made a strong impression. To this journey we owe two of the most beautiful of *The Monday Tales.*

He returned to Paris just in time to be present at the performance of his first play, *La Dernière Idole.* In spite of the fact that his patron was there, that the Duchess broke her fan, so vigorous her applause, Daudet tells us that he found it a relief when the curtain fell, and hurried away, edging along the walls, his collar turned up, ashamed and furtive as a thief.

In *Un Soir de première* he gives us a painful bit of confidence as to his varied emotions on a first night performance of one of his plays, and describes in his vivid way the agonies of an unsuccessful dramatist. Daudet's imagination had nerves, as well as wings. He suffered at times from an excess of it; and it must be remembered, as regards this sensitiveness concerning his plays, that he had cause for it; they have been the least successful of his writings, — his genius was not of the sort to accommodate itself readily to the exigencies of the stage.

In 1862 his health failed again, and he was granted another absence. During a sea-voyage,

he visited Corsica and Sardinia. He made many notes during this journey, which were afterwards used in *The Nabob.* Reminiscences of it in *The Monday Tales* are contained in the *Scènes Gastronomiques.*

On his return some memorable days were spent with Mistral and the Félibres.

In 1863 began the first series of *Letters from my Mill.* In the death of the Duc de Morny, 1865, Daudet lost a protector and friend. He at once and forever severed his connection with things official. Though the duties of his position were not onerous, they had proved irksome to him.

Incidentally, during those first years in Paris, Daudet had seen not a little of the life of Bohemia. Among those who met in the Brasserie des Martyres, in the street of the same name, back of Notre Dame, was one whom Daudet refers to more than once in the *Contes du Lundi,* Alfred Delvau, a young author, better known, however, to collectors of rarities than to the ordinary reader.

Upon the death of De Morny, Daudet and Delvau planned a journey together, which the latter has described in a little book now very rare. In this Daudet is referred to as *Fortunio!*

Fortunio has not a great deal to say of his comrade, but refers to him now and then as a not too talkative companion. It seems they were not always in harmony, as the "not too talkative companion" insisted always on retiring to bed immediately after supper, precisely at the moment when Fortunio was widest awake.

Recollections of a portion of this journey are to be found in *Alsace! Alsace!* *The Judge of Colmar* contains more impressions.

It was this friend Delvau to whom reference is again made in *The Blind Emperor* as the wild comrade with whom Daudet travelled through Baden, asking for food in divers inns in phrases whose poverty of words was concealed by a most moving musical setting. Startling indeed to the good innkeepers over the Rhine must have seemed the melodious phrases of the two mad Frenchmen.

The Blind Emperor also revives other memories of a journey made in 1866, before France had occasion to become more intimately acquainted with the Germans and their language.

Finest perhaps of all the flowering of Daudet's genius are those tales which are purely fictitious or fanciful. They have been likened to Hauff's, Hoffman's, Andersen's; but Daudet's style is peculiarly his own and inimitable. He plays upon the entire gamut of thought and feeling, passing from grave to gay, and striking music everywhere. Here is a thought as light, as evanescent, as the play of a sunbeam on the wing of a humming-bird, or the flashing of spray on an oar, as it dips into the ocean; — again the fine, strong breath of the mistral.

A charm that eludes analysis, or literal translation,—

> " Li vagoun dins de canestello
> Carrejon tout, e lèu, lèu, lèu !
> Mais carrejon pas lou soulèu,
> Mai carrejon pas lis estello ! "

Sunshine and starlight are here, the soul of Provence, its vigor and joy incarnate. Speech is a clumsy, lumbering vehicle at best. "So many things are lost in that journey from the brain to the hand," says Daudet. And how shall one translate into speech, fire and laughter and tears?

That which has endeared the writer of these short stories to the world is the charm of the *insaisissable.* More difficult to say what that is, than to state definitely all it is not. It is something as subtle as the symbolism of Maeterlinck, a quality that eludes the mere logician, the scientist, the prosateur. Even the wisdom of the sage shall not compass it. There are finer vibrations of this old planet than those to which our ears are accustomed; but to hear, the inner sense must be attuned to the music of an invisible orchestra, one must have spent long lazy hours in Nature's dear hostelry *à la belle Étoile!* — must have spelled out the book-lore written in quaint arabesques in that Bibliothèque des Cigales, whose next door neighbor is the Poet.

In this volume Tarascon appears — perhaps for the first time, for this may have been written in 1871, while the first of the Tartarin series is dated 1872,— Tarascon itself appears in all its glory of sunshine and river.

Henry James tells us that the little town received its name from an ancient legend of a terrible dragon known as the Tarasque. Saint Martha with her own hands tamed this fearful beast, which

once had its cavern among the rocks, where now a castle stands, and has given its name to the town of Tartarin, the Formidable! Whether this mythical creature was as noisy a beast as the dreadful dragon that belches fire and noise in the Wagnerian Trilogy, Mr. James has not told us; but certainly Tarascon has made no small amount of noise in the world since the day of the Dragon; and the Tarasconian of Alphonse Daudet is quite as formidable as the Wagnerian dragon, — with eyes that bulge ferociously, and lips that belch noise and fire.

Near by is the castle of good King Réné, a fortress of yellow stone, overlooking the river. Hither, in the middle of the fifteenth century, King Réné himself retired, grown weary of fighting and enamoured of his dear Provence, which, with a proper showing of gratitude, has embalmed his memory in many a legend. Beaucaire, separated from Tarascon by a little footbridge, was endeared to Daudet by many a childish recollection.

Tartarin himself does not appear in the Defence so feelingly described in this volume. A figure of too majestic, heroic proportions to be disposed of in a few brief pages — or perhaps at the time he was away lion-hunting.

Tarascon has long since forgiven "the mocking child of Nîmes," if indeed it was ever greatly indignant with him. How would it have been possible to remain churlishly vexed with Alphonse Daudet?

"And, besides, he is one of ourselves!" said a

son of the Midi: he had begun by abusing the creator of Tartarin with furious zeal, yet could not restrain his laughter in recalling the hero's prodigious feats, — that frank southern laughter *en large* which Daudet tells about: questioned, he admitted there was not a little of Tartarin in the South, and, gently led on, ended with a glorification of Daudet, claiming him as the true, unique product of the Midi — in whom the North had no share!

And this is the general attitude of the southerner towards Tartarin. They forgive in the southerner, in one of themselves, what they would never have pardoned in the Parisian, the bourgeois.

And no mere Parisian, no northerner, could have written the *Defence of Tarascon*. He would have passed by the sleepy little town with a glance of indifference. Only the humor and imagination of a southerner ever could have thought of rescuing it from oblivion, to make it live forever as the object of the most delicious and kindly irony ever penned, irony that leaves no sting. Only a meridional, one steeped in the sunshine, the intense warm atmosphere of the land of olives, could penetrate the emotions of so extraordinary a being as the Tarasconnais. "*Ils étaient si extraordinaires, ces méridionaux!*" writes Daudet. One can almost fancy how, with that adorable smile of his, he might have added, "Who should know better than I? Who more of a meridional than I myself?"

And because of this quality, Daudet cannot see his Provence with the eyes of the realist. It is not

a great bare stretch of country washed with sunshine, but the Land of Mirage, the Provence of the Nineteenth-Century Troubadours, the Land of Roumanille and Mathieu and Mistral, of flower-fêtes and contests, the Provence of legend and song, of tender, glowing fancy, — an empire of simple, kindly hearts.

To the Félibres and his friendship with them, Daudet owed the revival of boyish associations and the formation of new ties. He has repaid the debt, and aided not a little in the fusion of north and south, — the breaking down of those barriers which sympathy and sentiment decree, rather than politics.

But if Daudet was and remained a southerner, life in Paris taught him to note, to analyze, to avoid excess, tempered the exuberance of the southerner, gave his art a poise, strength, and self-restraint of character which otherwise it might have lacked. He owed much to the literary environment of Paris, and, above all, his comradeship with Flaubert, De Goncourt, and Zola.

Daudet never quite overcame his first impression of Paris. In writing of it and of things Parisian, he speaks somewhat from the standpoint of an outsider. The mighty maelstrom of modern life fascinates him, but his curiosity seems somewhat akin to that of a foreigner. The great city, with its varied scenes and ever-changing life, becomes for him at times a personified thing almost. Sometimes this Paris wears for him the face of a cruel inexorable monster that rends and devours;

again, the face of a courtesan, — without heart, whose smile is merely a grimace.

The life of the streets, of the home, impresses him profoundly. He starts for a walk and returns wearied, impregnated with all the wretchedness and sorrow of the great city. His soul is like a sensitized plate which records every impression. His sympathies, never effeminate, strike at times a note of the feminine, maternal almost in its tenderness.

This sympathy with wretchedness and suffering everywhere is the strongest, almost the only point of resemblance between Daudet and Dickens. One smiles with amazement to think that Daudet should have ever thought it necessary to disclaim such knowledge of Dickens as might warrant a charge of plagiarism, the resemblances of style are so superficial.

One lays aside *The Monday Tales* convinced that Daudet was possessed of a Sixth Sense, which perhaps may be imperfectly defined as the rudiments of the Five, and the Soul that interprets them, that intuitive faculty that marks the poet.

No musician, in the strict technical sense of the term, yet Daudet's prose is always musical, rhythmic, lyrical in quality. Not a poet in the sense in which Hugo was a poet, yet the poetic touch is upon all he has fashioned. His myopic eye saw innumerable fine things that escape ordinary eyes. Not a painter, yet he has left pen-pictures that will live when the canvas of many a modern masterpiece shall have faded.

If it may sometimes be said of Genius that all the Muses have presided over its destiny, may we not say that all the Graces were present at the cradle of Alphonse Daudet?

Fortunate and happy and blessed in his life, a sufferer too beyond most men, unsoured by suffering, unspoiled by success, this teller of stories — this Child of Provence, whose nervous, delicate fingers, wasted by disease, all the Graces guided, — he who could express with such surpassing tenderness and grace the things he saw, and, finest of fine things, added that touch of mirage, that gleam, —

> "The light that never was on sea or land,
> The consecration and the poet's dream."

M. M.

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PART I.

FANTASY AND HISTORY.

MONDAY TALES.

THE LAST LESSON.

A YOUNG ALSATIAN'S NARRATIVE.

THAT morning it was quite late before I started for school, and I was terribly afraid I should be scolded, for Monsieur Hamel had told us that he would question us upon participles, and I did not know the first thing about them. For a moment I thought of escaping from school and roving through the fields.

The day was so warm, so clear! The blackbirds were whistling on the outskirts of the woods. In Rippert Meadow, behind the sawmill, the Prussians were drilling. All these things were far more attractive to me than the rule for the use of participles. But I mustered up strength to resist temptation, and hurried on to school.

As I reached the town hall, I saw a group of people; they loitered before the little grating, reading the placards posted upon it. For two years every bit of bad news had been announced to us from that grating. There we read what battles had been lost, what requisitions made; there we learned what orders had issued from head-

quarters. And though I did not pause with the rest, I wondered to myself, "What can be the matter now?"

As I ran across the square, Wachter, the blacksmith, who, in company with his apprentice, was absorbed in reading the notice, exclaimed, —

"Not so fast, child! You will reach your school soon enough!"

I believed he was making game of me, and I was quite out of breath when I entered Monsieur Hamel's small domain.

Now, at the beginning of the session there was usually such an uproar that it could be heard as far as the street. Desks were opened and shut, lessons recited at the top of our voices, all shouting together, each of us stopping his ears that he might hear better. Then the master's big ruler would descend upon his desk, and he would say, —

"Silence!"

I counted upon making my entrance in the midst of the usual babel and reaching my seat unobserved, but upon this particular morning all was hushed. Sabbath stillness reigned. Through the open window I could see that my comrades had already taken their seats; I could see Monsieur Hamel himself, passing back and forth, his formidable iron ruler under his arm.

I must open that door. I must enter in the midst of that deep silence. I need not tell you that I grew red in the face, and terror seized me.

But, strangely enough, as Monsieur Hamel scru-

tinized me, there was no anger in his gaze. He said very gently, —

"Take your seat quickly, my little Franz. We were going to begin without you."

I climbed over the bench, and seated myself. But when I had recovered a little from my fright, I noticed that our master had donned his beautiful green frock-coat, his finest frilled shirt, and his embroidered black silk calotte, which he wore only on inspection days, or upon those occasions when prizes were distributed. Moreover, an extraordinary solemnity had taken possession of my classmates. But the greatest surprise of all came when my eye fell upon the benches at the farther end of the room. Usually they were empty, but upon this morning the villagers were seated there, solemn as ourselves. There sat old Hauser, with his three-cornered hat, there sat the venerable mayor, the aged carrier, and other personages of importance. All of our visitors seemed sad, and Hauser had brought with him an old primer, chewed at the edges. It lay wide open upon his knees, his big spectacles reposing upon the page.

While I was wondering at all these things, Monsieur Hamel had taken his seat, and in the same grave and gentle tone in which he had greeted me, he said to us, —

"My children, this is the last day I shall teach you. The order has come from Berlin that henceforth in the schools of Alsace and Lorraine all instruction shall be given in the German tongue only. Your new master will arrive to-morrow. To-day

you hear the last lesson you will receive in French, and I beg you will be most attentive."

My "last" French lesson! And I scarcely knew how to write! Now I should never learn. My education must be cut short. How I grudged at that moment every minute I had lost, every lesson I had missed for the sake of hunting birds' nests or making slides upon the Saar! And those books which a moment before were so dry and dull, so heavy to carry, my grammar, my Bible-history, seemed now to wear the faces of old friends, whom I could not bear to bid farewell. It was with them as with Monsieur Hamel, the thought that he was about to leave, that I should see him no more, made me forget all the blows of his ruler, and the many punishments I had received.

Poor man! It was in honor of that last session that he was arrayed in his finest Sunday garb, and now I began to understand why the villagers had gathered at the back of the class-room. Their presence at such a moment seemed to express a regret that they had not visited that school-room oftener; it was their way of telling our master they thanked him for his forty years of faithful service, and desired to pay their respects to the land whose empire was departing.

I was busied with these reflections when I heard my name called. It was now my turn to recite. Ah! what would I not have given then, had I been able to repeat from beginning to end that famous rule for the use of participles loudly, distinctly, and without a single mistake; but I became en-

tangled in the first few words, and remained standing at my seat, swinging from side to side, my heart swelling. I dared not raise my head. Monsieur Hamel was addressing me.

"I shall not chide thee, my little Franz; thy punishment will be great enough. So it is! We say to ourselves each day, 'Bah! I have time enough. I will learn to-morrow.' And now see what results. Ah, it has ever been the greatest misfortune of our Alsace that she was willing to put off learning till To-morrow! And now these foreigners can say to us, and justly, 'What! you profess to be Frenchmen, and can neither speak nor write your own language?' And in all this, my poor Franz, you are not the chief culprit. Each of us has something to reproach himself with.

"Your parents have not shown enough anxiety about having you educated. They preferred to see you spinning, or tilling the soil, since that brought them in a few more sous. And have I nothing with which to reproach myself? Did I not often send you to water my garden when you should have been at your tasks? And if I wished to go trout-fishing, was my conscience in the least disturbed when I gave you a holiday?"

One topic leading to another, Monsieur Hamel began to speak of the French language, saying it was the strongest, clearest, most beautiful language in the world, which we must keep as our heritage, never allowing it to be forgotten, telling us that when a nation has become enslaved, she

holds the key which shall unlock her prison as long as she preserves her native tongue.[1]

Then he took a grammar, and read our lesson to us, and I was amazed to see how well I understood. Everything he said seemed so very simple, so easy! I had never, I believe, listened to any one as I listened to him at that moment, and never before had he shown so much patience in his explanations. It really seemed as if the poor man, anxious to impart everything he knew before he took leave of us, desired to strike a single blow that might drive all his knowledge into our heads at once.

The lesson was followed by writing. For this occasion Monsieur Hamel had prepared some copies that were entirely new, and upon these were written in a beautiful round hand, "*France, Alsace! France, Alsace!*"

These words were as inspiring as the sight of the tiny flags attached to the rod of our desks. It was good to see how each one applied himself, and how silent it was! Not a sound save the scratching of pens as they touched our papers. Once, indeed, some cockchafers entered the room, but no one paid the least attention to them, not even the tiniest pupil; for the youngest were absorbed in tracing their straight strokes as earnestly and conscientiously as if these too were written in French! On the roof of the schoolhouse the pigeons were cooing softly, and I thought to myself as I listened,

[1] "S'il tient sa langue il tient la clé qui de ses chaines le délivre." F. MISTRAL.

"And must they also be compelled to sing in German?"

From time to time, looking up from my page, I saw Monsieur Hamel, motionless in his chair, his eyes riveted upon each object about him, as if he desired to fix in his mind, and forever, every detail of his little school. Remember that for forty years he had been constantly at his post, in that very school-room, facing the same playground. Little had changed. The desks and benches were polished and worn, through long use; the walnut-trees in the playground had grown taller; and the hop-vine he himself had planted curled its tendrils about the windows, running even to the roof. What anguish must have filled the poor man's heart, as he thought of leaving all these things, and heard his sister moving to and fro in the room overhead, busied in fastening their trunks! For on the morrow they were to leave the country, never to return. Nevertheless his courage did not falter; not a single lesson was omitted. After writing came history, and then the little ones sang their "*Ba, Be, Bi, Bo, Bu,*" together. Old Hauser, at the back of the room, had put on his spectacles, and, holding his primer in both hands, was spelling out the letters with the little ones. He too was absorbed in his task; his voice trembled with emotion, and it was so comical to hear him that we all wanted to laugh and to cry at the same moment. Ah! never shall I forget that last lesson!

Suddenly the church clock struck twelve, and then the Angelus was heard.

At the same moment, a trumpet-blast under our window announced that the Prussians were returning from drill. Monsieur Hamel rose in his chair. He was very pale, but never before had he seemed to me so tall as at that moment.

"My friends — " he said, "my friends — I — I — "

But something choked him. He could not finish his sentence.

Then he took a piece of chalk, and grasping it with all his strength, wrote in his largest hand, —

"VIVE LA FRANCE!"

He remained standing at the blackboard, his head resting against the wall. He did not speak again, but a motion of his hand said to us, —

"That is all. You are dismissed."

A GAME OF BILLIARDS.

EVEN soldiers are exhausted after two days' fighting, especially if they have passed the night, knapsacks upon their backs, torrents of rain descending upon them. And yet for three mortal hours they had been left to wait in the puddles along the highway, in the mire of fields soaked with rain.

Heavy with fatigue, weakened by the effects of previous nights, their uniforms drenched, they pressed closer together for warmth and support. Here and there, leaning upon a neighbor's knapsack, a man had fallen asleep standing; and upon the relaxed faces of these men, overcome by sleep, might be read more plainly than before the traces which weariness and privations had made. In the mud and rain, without fire, without food, overhead a sky heavy and lowering — around them, on every side, the enemy! Dismal indeed!

What are they doing yonder? What is going on?

The guns, their mouths turned towards the woods, seem to be lying in wait. The mitrailleuses from their hiding-places stare fixedly at the horizon. All is ready for an attack. Why is none made? For what are they waiting?

They await orders from headquarters, but none come.

And yet it is only a short distance to headquarters, to that beautiful Louis XIII. château whose red-brick walls, washed by the rain, are seen halfway up the hill, glistening through the thickets. Truly a princely dwelling, well worthy of bearing the fanion of a Marshal of France. Separated from the main road by a big trench and a ramp of stone, are green, smooth-shaven lawns extending even to the stone steps of the château, and bordered with vases of flowers. On the side of the house farthest away from the road, the daylight darts through the leafage of the arbors, making bright openings in them. Upon an artificial pond which sparkles like a mirror, swans are swimming, and under the pagoda-shaped roof of a large aviary peacocks and golden pheasants strut about, spreading their wings and sending their shrill cries through the foliage. Though the owners of the house have departed, there is nowhere a perceptible sign of that ruin and utter desolation which war brings in its train. Under the oriflamme of the chief of the army not the smallest flower dotting the lawn has been destroyed, and it is indescribably charming to discover, so near the field of battle, that calm and opulence that result from systematic care, — to observe such evenly trimmed shrubberies, such silent avenues of shade. The rain, which in its descent elsewhere has rutted the roads and heaped them with mire, in this quarter has been nothing more than an aristocratic shower. Nothing vulgar

about it. It has revived the red tints of the bricks, the verdure of the lawns, it has added fresh lustre to the leaves of the orange-trees, to the swans' white plumage. Everything glistens. The scene is peaceful. In fact, were it not for the flag floating from the top of the roof, and the sight of two sentinels before the gate, one would never believe headquarters were here.

The horses are resting in the stables; here and there officers' servants are seen, and orderlies in undress, lounging about the kitchens of the château, and now and then a gardener tranquilly dragging his rake through the sand of the grounds.

In the dining-room, whose windows front the entrance of the château, is seen a table partly cleared, bottles uncorked, glasses tarnished, empty and dimmed, resting upon the wrinkled cloth, — in short, every indication that the repast is ended. The guests have departed, but in a side room loud voices are heard, peals of laughter, the rolling of billiard balls, and the clinking of glasses. The Marshal has just started upon his game, and that is why the army is waiting for orders. Once the Marshal has begun, the heavens might fall, but nothing on earth would hinder him from finishing his game.

For if the mighty soldier has a single weakness, it is his fondness for billiards. There he stands, as grave as though a battle had begun; he is in full uniform, his breast covered with decorations; his repast, the grog he has drunken, and the excitement of the game animate him. His eyes sparkle,

and his cheek-bones are flushed. About him gather his aides-de-camp, most assiduous in their attentions, deferential, and overcome with admiration at each of his shots. When the Marshal makes a point, they rush towards the mark. Is the Marshal thirsty? Each one desires to prepare his grog! Such a rustling of epaulettes and panaches, such a rattling of crosses and aiguillettes! How they bow and smile, these courtiers! What elegance and charm of manner! And then to see such embroideries, so many new uniforms, in this lofty chamber carved in oak, opening upon parks and courts of honor! It reminds one of those autumns of Compiègne, and makes him forget for a moment those figures in muddied cloaks, gathered yonder in the roads, making such sombre groups, as they wait in the rain.

The Marshal's adversary is an officer of his staff, a little captain who curls and laces and wears light gloves; he is an excellent shot at billiards, and could beat all the marshals on earth, but he understands how to keep at a respectful distance from his chief, and exercises all his skill in playing so that he shall neither win, nor seem to lose, too readily. Evidently an officer with an eye for the future.

Attention, young man, look out! The Marshal is five points ahead. If you can end the game as you have begun it, your promotion is surer than it would be, were you standing outside with the others, beneath those torrents of water that darken the horizon. It would be a pity, too, to soil that

fine uniform, and tarnish the gold of its aiguillettes, waiting for orders that never come.

The game is extremely interesting. The balls roll, graze each other, and pass; they rebound. Every moment the play grows more exciting. But suddenly a flash of light is seen in the sky and the report of a cannon is heard. A heavy, rumbling sound shakes the windows. Every one starts and casts an uneasy glance about him. The Marshal alone remains unmoved. He sees nothing, hears nothing, for, leaning over the table, he is about to make a magnificent draw-shot. Draw-shots are his forte!

But again that flash, and again! From the cannon fresh reports, and nearer together now. The aides-de-camp run to the window. Can it be that the Prussians are attacking?

"Let them!" says the Marshal, chalking his cue. "Your turn, captain!"

The staff thrills with admiration. Turenne asleep upon a gun-carriage was nothing compared to this marshal, so calmly absorbed in his game at the moment of action! But all this time the tumult increases. With the shock of the cannon mingles the rattling of the mitrailleuses, and the rumbling of volley upon volley; a reddish cloud dark at the edges rises from the further end of the lawn. All the rear of the park is on fire. Frightened peacocks and pheasants clamor in the aviary, Arabian horses, away in the stables, scent the powder and rear in their stalls. At headquarters a general commotion begins. Despatch follows despatch.

Messengers arrive at a gallop. Everywhere they are asking for the Marshal.

But the Marshal is unapproachable. Have I not told you that nothing in the world could hinder him from finishing a game once begun?

"Your play, captain — "

But the captain is distracted. Ah! Youth is youth. He loses his head, forgets what he is about, and makes two successive runs which almost win the game for him. And now the Marshal is furious. Surprise and indignation are visible upon his manly features. At this very moment a horse rushes into the courtyard at full speed and drops exhausted. An aide-de-camp, covered with mud, forces the sentry, makes one bound over the stone steps, crying, "Marshal, Marshal!" And this is his reception: the Marshal, red as a cock, and swelling with anger, appears at the window, cue in hand.

"Who is there? What is it? Is there no sentry here?"

"But, Marshal — "

"Oh, yes, yes — later — let them wait for my orders — in God's name!"

And the window closes with a bang.

Let them wait for his orders! And that is exactly what they are doing, these poor fellows. The wind drives rain and grapeshot in their faces. Whole battalions are slaughtered, whilst others, perfectly useless, stand bearing arms, unable to understand why they remain inactive. Nothing else to do. They wait for orders. But men may

die without word of command, and these men die in hundreds, falling behind bushes, dropping in trenches in front of that great silent château. And even after death, the grapeshot continues to lacerate their bodies, and from those gaping wounds flows a silent stream, — the generous blood of France. And above, yonder, in the billiard-room, all is as excited as upon the battle-field, for the Marshal has regained his advantage, and the little captain is playing like a lion.

Seventeen! eighteen! nineteen! Scarcely time to mark the points. The sound of battle grows nearer and nearer. The Marshal has but one more point to play for. Already shells are falling in the park. One has burst in the pond. Its glassy sheet reddens, and a terrified swan is seen swimming amid a whirl of bloody plumage. And now the last shot.

And then — deep silence. Only the sound of rain falling upon the leafage of the arbors, only an indistinct rumbling noise at the foot of the hill, and along the muddy roads a sound like the tramping of hurrying herds. The army is utterly routed. The Marshal has won his game.

THE VISION OF THE JUDGE OF COLMAR.

BEFORE he had taken the oath of allegiance to Emperor William, there was nowhere a happier man than little Judge Dollinger of the Court of Colmar; when he arrived in the court-room, full-lipped, big-bellied, his toque pushed jauntily sidewise, his triple chin resting placidly upon his muslin neckband, he seemed to say, as he seated himself, "Ah! a nice little nap I shall have!" and it was a pleasure to see him stretch his plump little legs, burying himself in his great armchair, while he reposed upon that fair, soft leather cushion to which he owed the fact that his complexion was as fresh as ever, and his temper as unruffled, although he had occupied a judge's seat for more than thirty years.

Unfortunate Dollinger!

From the moment he touched that leather circumference he was lost. He found it so comfortable, grew so attached to that cushion of moleskin, that sooner than budge from it, he became a Prussian. Emperor William said to him, "Keep your seat, Monsieur Dollinger!" and Dollinger kept it; and here we behold him at the Court of Colmar, dispensing justice as ably as ever, but in the name of His Berlinese Majesty.

About him nothing has changed, — the same tribunal, faded and dull, the same court-room, with its shiny benches and hum of lawyers' voices, the same dim, subdued light falling through the high windows with their serge curtains, the same majestic figure of the Christ, covered with dust, His head bowed, His arms outstretched. But the Court of Colmar has lost no whit of its former dignity in passing over to Prussia. There is still an Emperor's bust back of the judges' bench. Yet, in spite of all these things, Dollinger does not feel at home. Vainly he rolls from side to side in his armchair, buries himself in it angrily: he can no longer enjoy those nice little naps of other days; and when he chances, as of old, to fall asleep at a hearing, he has frightful dreams!

Dollinger dreams that he is seated upon a high mountain; it reminds him somewhat of Honeck, or the Balloon of Alsace. What is he doing there alone, in his judge's robe, at that vast height where nothing can be seen but stunted trees and swarms of flies? Dollinger does not know why he is there. Cold drops of sweat rise upon him; he trembles in suspense, and suffers all the agony of a nightmare.

Across the Rhine, behind the firs of the Black Forest, the sun is rising, large and red; and as it rises, below, in the valleys of Munster and Thann, is heard from one end of Alsace to the other an indistinct rumble, the sound of footsteps and of wagons in motion; it grows louder and nearer. Dollinger's heart sinks within him. Soon, upon the long, winding road ascending the sides of the

mountain, the Judge of Colmar sees approaching him a mournful, interminable train; all Alsace has chosen this pass of the Vosges as the starting-point of its solemn emigration!

Leading the procession, come long wagons drawn by four oxen, those long, open wagons which at harvest-time are seen overflowing with sheaves; now, however, they are loaded with furniture, tools, and luggage of all sorts. Big beds, tall presses, calico hangings, chests and spinning-wheels, children's chairs, ancestral armchairs, piles of ancient relics dragged from their corners, and scattering to every wind along the highway the sacred dust of the hearth. Entire households depart in these wagons, groaning as they advance. The oxen are scarcely able to drag their burden, for it seems as if the very earth clung to the wheels, as if these handfuls of dust clinging to plough and harrow, to rake and pickaxe, increased the burden they bore, — as though this departure were indeed an uprooting of the soil.

Then followed a silent train of people, of all conditions and ages: the aged grandfather with his three-cornered hat, — tremulous, leaning upon his staff; boys with flaxen curls, a single suspender supporting their trousers of fustian; the paralytic grandmother stout lads are bearing upon their shoulders; mothers, pressing their nursing babes closer to the breast; all are there, the brave-hearted, and the infirm, soldiers to be, and those who have faced the horrors of many a battle-field; cuirassiers, who have lost their limbs, dragging

themselves upon crutches; artillery-men, emaciated, broken-down, the damps of the casemates of Spandau still clinging to their uniforms. And all this host moves on its way with heads erect; at the side of that very road over which they are passing, the Judge of Colmar is seated, and as they pass him by he reads upon each averted face an awful look of anger and loathing.

Oh, unhappy Dollinger! he longs to hide, to flee, but it is impossible. For his armchair cannot be moved from that mountain, and his leather cushion is fastened to the armchair, and he is as firmly attached to that leather cushion. And now he understands that a sort of pillory stands there, and he is in it, and his pillory has been erected so high in order that all the world may witness his shame.

The emigrants move on, village after village; those of the Swiss frontier leading enormous herds of cattle; those of the Saar carrying their heavy iron tools in ore-wagons. Then the larger towns arrive, spinners, tanners, weavers and warpers, burghers and priests, rabbis, magistrates, black robes and red robes. The tribunal of Colmar appears, its venerable president at the head. And Dollinger, overwhelmed with shame, seeks to hide his face, but his hands are paralyzed; tries to close his eyes, but his eyelids are stiff and immovable. There he is compelled to remain, the most observed of observers; he may not be spared a single one of those contemptuous glances which his colleagues cast at him as they pass.

A judge in the pillory! Terrible indeed! And, worst of all, all his dear ones are in that concourse, and not one of them appears to recognize him. His wife, his children, pass before him, their eyes fixed on the ground. It would seem that they too are ashamed of him! Even little Michel, whom he loves so dearly, passes him by, never to return, and casts not a single glance in his direction. But the aged president pauses a moment, and whispers to him,—

"Come with us, Dollinger. Do not remain there, my friend!"

But Dollinger is unable to rise. He tries to move his limbs; he calls. All day long the procession moves on; and as the daylight fades, it has disappeared in the distance, and silence descends upon those fair valleys dotted with factories and belfry towers. All Alsace has departed. Only the Judge of Colmar remains. And there he sits at the top of the [illegible] erected in his pillory, immovable.

[illegible] the scene changes. Yew-trees are [illegible] rows of tombs, and an assem- [illegible] It is the cemetery of Colmar. [illegible] has come to his last resting-place. [illegible] are tolling. Councillor [illegible] Such a sick horror could not [illegible] It has unscrewed [illegible] from his leather cushion, [illegible]th, this man whose sole [illegible] seated forever!

[illegible] horrible than to dream [illegible] own chief mourner? [illegible] Dollinger said:

own burial-service. And that which afflicts him more than his death is the fact that in this immense crowd which presses about him is neither friend nor relative. No one from Colmar, — only the Prussians! Prussian soldiers escort the bier; Prussian magistrates are the chief mourners; and the words that are spoken over his grave are Prussian; and the cold, cold earth thrown over him is, alas! Prussian earth. Suddenly the crowd stands respectfully aside. A magnificent white cuirassier approaches, concealing under his cloak something which looks not unlike a crown of immortelles. All about him voices are heard, saying,

"Look! There is Bismarck! There is Bismarck!"

And the Judge of Colmar thinks sadly, "A great honor, Count, you bestow upon me, but if I only had my little Michel — "

He does not end his sentence. A mighty burst of laughter interrupts him, — wild, mad, uncontrollable laughter, scandalizing to hear.

"What are they laughing about?" wonders the terrified judge. He raises himself and looks. It is his cushion, his own leather cushion, that Count Bismarck has placed religiously upon his grave, and around its moleskin circumference runs this inscription, —

To JUDGE DOLLINGER,

The Glory of the Bench,[1]
Souvenirs and regrets!

[1] "La Magistrature *Assise*." The play upon words is scarcely translatable.

From one end of the cemetery to the other ring peals of laughter, convulsive laughter; and the boisterous mirth of the Prussians echoes even to the floor of the vault where the dead man lies, weeping with shame, overwhelmed, covered with endless ridicule.

THE BOY SPY.

THEY called him Stenne, "little Stenne." He was a child of Paris, puny and pale. He might have been ten, possibly fifteen years old. It is hard to tell the age of such midges. His mother was dead, and his father, an old marine, was on guard in the Quartier du Temple. Babies and nursemaids, old women carrying their camp-stools, poor mothers, in short, all that portion of Paris that jogs along on foot, found a safe retreat from carriages in those gardens bordered by sidewalks; they were well acquainted with Father Stenne, and they adored him. For they knew well that, in spite of that ferocious mustache, the terror of stray dogs and of many a lounger who frequented the benches, the old soldier's smile was full of kindness, almost maternal in its tenderness; and to see that smile, one had merely to ask the good man, "How is your little boy?"

For Father Stenne loved his boy dearly. It gladdened his heart to have the little fellow call for him towards evening, after school was out; and together they promenaded the walks, stopping at every bench to reply to the polite greetings of the frequenters of the gardens.

But, alas! after the siege began, all was changed. Father Stenne's square was closed, and petroleum

was stored there; the poor man was compelled to be on guard ceaselessly, passing his days in those deserted groves, where everything was in confusion and disorder. He was not allowed even a smoke. He could not see his boy until he reached home, late in the evening. You should have seen his mustache when he mentioned the Prussians! but little Stenne was not at all averse to this new life.

For these gamins a siege furnishes considerable diversion. No more lessons, no more school! Vacation every day, and the streets full of life as a field on a fair-day!

The boy roamed the streets all day long, and never went in until nightfall. He accompanied the battalions of the neighborhood as they marched to the rampart, with a preference for those where the bands played the liveliest music, and on that subject little Stenne was quite an authority. He would tell you with an air of conviction that the band of the Ninety-sixth did not amount to much, but that of the Fifty-fifth was excellent. When he was not on the march, he would watch the *mobiles* at drill; and then there were those hours of waiting, when, his basket under his arm, he joined the long lines of people forming in front of butchers' and bakers' shops, in the unlighted streets, in the dull gray dawn of those winter days. And there, feet in the water, one stood, and made new acquaintances. Politics were discussed, and, being the son of Monsieur Stenne, he was asked his opinion on every hand. But most amusing of all he found

those *bouchon*[1]-games, especially that famous game of *galoche*, which the Breton soldiers had made quite fashionable during the siege. When little Stenne was not at the rampart or waiting in front of some baker's shop, you were sure of finding him watching a game of *galoche* in the Place du Château-d'Eau. Of course you will understand that he never played himself; it cost too much money. He contented himself merely with devouring the players with his eyes.

A big fellow who wore a coat and blue overalls, and never staked less than a hundred-sou piece, excited his special admiration. Whenever he ran, one could hear his money jingling in the depths of his pockets.

One day, picking up a piece of money which had rolled directly in front of little Stenne's feet, this fellow whispered to the little one, —

"That makes you squint, eh? Well, now, if you like, I can tell you where there are more of them."

And when the game was ended, he led little Stenne to a corner of the Place, and proposed the latter should join him in selling newspapers to the Prussians, thirty francs for each trip they made. At first little Stenne indignantly refused; and for three days in succession he was not seen watching the game, — three terrible days for him. He neither ate nor slept. At night he saw great heaps of *galoches* lying at the foot of his bed, and the floor paved with shining lines of hundred-sou

[1] *Bouchon.* A game in which pieces of money are placed upon a cork, — which is to be knocked over with a quoit.

pieces! The temptation was too strong; and the fourth day he returned to Château-d'Eau, saw the big fellow again, and allowed himself to be seduced.

They set out one snowy morning, carrying a canvas bag, their newspapers hidden in their blouses. They reached the Porte de Flandres just before daybreak. His companion took Stenne's hand, and, approaching the sentinel, — a worthy sedentary, with a red nose and a benevolent air, — he said in a whining voice, —

"Let us pass, my good sir. Our mother is sick; papa is dead. We are going, my little brother and I, to dig potatoes in the field."

He began to cry. Stenne, feeling very much ashamed, hung his head. The sentinel looked at both of them for a moment, then glanced at the road, white and deserted.

"Pass, but be quick!" he said, standing aside, and then they found themselves on the Aubervilliers road. How the rascal laughed!

Vaguely, as if in a dream, little Stenne saw factory after factory turned into barracks, deserted barricades stuffed with mouldy rags, and tall chimneys cutting the fog; but from those chimney tops, lost in the sky, no smoke ascended, and they were dented in places. Along the road sentinels were posted, and muffled officers stood, looking through their field-glasses; small tents soaked with melted snow were pitched in front of the dying fires. Stenne's companion knew the road well, and took a cross-cut to avoid passing the guard; but they were obliged to pass the advance-guard of sharp-

shooters. There they were in their capes, squatted in the bottom of a watery ditch which ran along the railroad to Soissons. But this time the big fellow tried to tell his story all in vain. They were not allowed to pass. While he was lamenting, there issued from the gate-keeper's house an old sergeant, white-haired and wrinkled, who looked not unlike Father Stenne himself.

"Come, you rascals, don't cry any more," he said to the boys. "You may go and dig your potatoes, but first come in and warm yourselves a little; that young vagabond there looks as if he were frozen!"

Alas! little Stenne was not trembling from cold, but from fear and shame. Inside they found some soldiers squatting around a wretched fire; a widow's fire it might well have been called, but at its warmth they were endeavoring to thaw out their biscuits at the point of their bayonets. They crowded closer, to make room for the boys, and gave them a swallow of brandy and some coffee. While they were drinking, an officer appeared at the door, called the sergeant, whispered something in a very low voice, and suddenly disappeared.

"Boys!" said the sergeant, returning with a radiant face, "there 'll be fighting this night! The watchword of the Prussians is discovered. This time I believe we shall recapture that cursed Bourget."

There was an outburst of bravos and laughter, dancing and singing and polishing of sword-bayonets; taking advantage of the general uproar, the boys disappeared.

When they had passed the trench, they came to the open plain, and at its extremity ran a long white wall, pierced with loop-holes. Towards this wall the boys directed their footsteps, stopping at every step and making believe that they were gathering potatoes.

"Let us return. Don't go any further," said little Stenne, again and again.

The other shrugged his shoulders, and pushed on without pause.

Suddenly they heard the sharp click of a gun.

"Down!" said the elder, and dropped to the ground. He lay at full length, and whistled. An answering whistle was heard through the snow. They advanced on all fours. In front of the wall and level with the ground, appeared a pair of yellow mustachios, surmounted by a greasy cap. Stenne's companion jumped into the trench and stood by the Prussian's side. "That's my brother," he said, pointing to his companion.

This brother of his was so small that the Prussian burst out laughing as he looked at him, and was obliged to lift him in his arms to get him as far as the breach.

On the other side of the wall were huge earthworks, felled trees, black holes dug in the snow, and in each hole was a head like the first, with its yellow mustaches, which quivered with laughter as the boys passed by. In one spot stood a gardener's house, casemated with tree-trunks. Downstairs it was filled with soldiers playing cards and making soup before a big fire which burned

merrily. A savory odor of bacon and cabbage ascended. How different all this from the sharp-shooters' bivouac! Overhead were the officers' quarters. The sound of a piano was heard. Champagne flowed freely. When the Parisians entered, a joyous hurrah greeted them. They distributed their newspapers. The officers made the boys drink and talk. The bearing of all these officers was proud and insolent, but the elder of the boys amused them with his vulgar wit and street-Arab's vocabulary. They roared as they repeated his words after him, rolling delightedly in the mud of Paris he had brought them.

Little Stenne would have liked to put in a word here and there, to show them he was no fool, but something stopped his tongue. Opposite him, apart from the rest, sat a Prussian who was older, more serious than the others. He was reading, or seemed to be, but his eyes never left the two boys. There was something both tender and reproachful in that look. Had this man a child of his own at home, a child of the same age as Stenne, and did his look say, "I would rather die than see a son of mine bent on such an errand as this"?

From the moment those eyes met his, Stenne felt as if a hand had laid a weight upon his heart and stopped its beating. To forget his agony, he began to drink. Soon everything swam about him. Amid loud bursts of laughter, he could hear in a dazed fashion what his comrade was saying. The latter was ridiculing the National Guard; he mimicked a muster in the Marais and a night-

alarm on the ramparts. Then he lowered his voice, the officers came up closer, and their faces grew grave. The young wretch was about to warn them of the intended attack of the sharpshooters.

But now little Stenne roused himself in a fury. He had suddenly sobered.

"Stop that!" he said. "I won't have it."

The other smiled merely and continued. Before he had finished, all the officers were standing. One of them showed the boys the door, saying, —

"Off with you!"

They began to talk among themselves very rapidly, and in German. The big boy marched out, proud as a doge, jingling his money. Stenne followed him, hanging his head. And as he passed by the Prussian whose glance had disturbed his peace of mind so greatly, he heard a sad voice saying, —

"*Bas chôli, ça. Bas chôli.*"[1]

Tears sprang to his eyes.

Once on the plain again, the boys began to run, and their return was rapid. Their bag was full of potatoes the Prussians had given them, and carrying it they passed the trench where the sharpshooters were, without being stopped. The men were preparing for the attack of the coming night. Troops were arriving silently, and forming behind the walls. The old sergeant was there, busied in arranging his men. How happy he looked! As the boys passed, he recognized them and smiled kindly.

[1] "That was a mean business! a mean business!"

Oh, how that smile tortured little Stenne! For a moment he longed to cry out, "Don't go there to-night! We have betrayed you." But the other had said, "If you speak, we shall be shot," and fear kept him silent.

At La Corneuve they went into a deserted house to share their money. Truth compels me to state that the division was an honest one, and that when little Stenne heard all those fine franc-pieces rattling in his blouse and thought of all those games of *galoche* which he saw in the near future, his crime did not so much appall him.

But when at last the wretched child was alone! After they had passed the gates and his companion left him, then his pockets began to grow heavy indeed. And the hand which had pressed so heavily upon his heart, pressed more heavily than ever. And Paris no longer seemed to him the same Paris. Passers-by seemed to gaze at him severely, as if they knew whence he came. Even the sound of carriage-wheels and the flourish of drums, where the troops were drilling along the canal, seemed to be saying that one word "Spy!" At last he reached his home, glad to discover that his father had not yet returned. He ascended quickly to their chamber, and hid the money which weighed him down so heavily.

Never had Father Stenne felt more amiably disposed or happier than he did, returning home that evening. For good news had just come from the country outside of Paris; affairs were going better. And as he ate, the old soldier looked at his gun

hanging on the wall, and said to the child, with that charming smile of his, —

"Well, boy! you should fight the Prussians if you were old enough!" Towards eight o'clock the cannonade began.

"It is at Aubervilliers. They are fighting at Bourget," said the worthy man, who knew all his forts well. Little Stenne grew pale, and, pretending that he was very tired, he went to bed, but he could not sleep. For the booming of the cannons never ceased. He pictured to himself the sharpshooters, reaching by night the spot where they were to surprise the Prussians and falling into an ambuscade themselves. He recalled the sergeant who had smiled at him, and thought of him lying out there in the snow, and so many, so many beside him. And the blood-money was there, concealed under his pillow; and it was he, the son of Monsieur Stenne, a soldier who had — tears choked him. In the side room, he heard his father pace to and fro. He opened a window. In the square below, the call to arms sounded. A battalion of mobiles, about to set out, were calling their numbers. Yes, this was a battle in real earnest. The wretched child could not restrain a sob.

"What ails you?" asked Father Stenne, entering the room.

The child could control himself no longer. He jumped from his bed and would have thrown himself at his father's feet. But his sudden movement sent the money rolling upon the floor.

"What is that? Have you been stealing?" asked the old man, and he trembled.

Then without pausing to take breath, little Stenne told him all that had happened in that visit to the Prussians, and what share he had had in it. And, by degrees, as he told his story he seemed to breathe more freely, that silent accuser in his heart ceased to torture him.

Father Stenne's face, as he listened, was terrible. When he had heard the last word, he buried his face in his hands and wept.

"Father, father!" the child tried to say.

But the old man pushed the boy away from him without a word, and began to pick up the money.

"Is this all?" he asked.

Little Stenne nodded. The old man took down his gun and his cartridge-box, and put the money in his pocket.

"Very well," he said; "I will return it to them."

And without another word, without looking back a single time, he descended, and went out into the night, and mingled with the mobiles who were leaving. He was never seen again.

THE MOTHER.

A SOUVENIR OF THE SIEGE.

THAT morning I had gone to Mont Valérien to see our artist-friend, Monsieur B——, then a lieutenant in the mobile of the Seine. I found that fine fellow on guard. No way of getting out of it! And there he was, compelled to pace back and forth, before the postern of the fort, like a sailor on watch, while we talked of Paris, of the war, and of dear ones far away. Suddenly my lieutenant, who, in spite of his military coat, was as tremendous a dauber as ever, stopped short in the middle of his sentence, and caught my arm.

"There's a fine Daumier!" he whispered. He was looking at something out of the corner of one eye, and that small gray eye of his kindled like a hunting-dog's, as he pointed to the silhouette of two venerable figures that had just made their appearance upon the plateau of Mont Valérien.

And indeed the couple suggested some fine sketch fresh from Daumier's hand. The man wore a chestnut-colored surtout, with a collar of greenish velvet, that looked like old wood-moss; he was short and lean and ruddy, with a low forehead, round eyes, and nose like an owl's beak; his head was like a shrivelled bird's head, and his air was at

once silly and solemn. To complete the picture, he carried on one arm a bag, embroidered with flowers, from which protruded the neck of a bottle, and under the other arm a box of preserves, that everlasting tin box, which Parisians of those days will never see again without recalling that five months' siege of theirs. Of the woman all that one saw at first was an enormous hood-like bonnet and an old shawl whose scanty folds wrapped her from head to foot, revealing all the more plainly the poverty it attempted to conceal; now and then, however, the tip of a sharp nose peered out from the faded ruches of her bonnet, and a few spare and grizzled locks could be seen.

When they reached the plateau, the man paused to regain his breath, and to wipe his forehead. They certainly could not have been too warm in that foggy, keen November air, but they had walked very quickly.

The woman never paused, not she! Advancing directly towards the postern, she looked at us a moment, with some hesitation, and as if she would speak with us; but, doubtless intimidated by an officer's uniform, she preferred to address the sentinel, and I heard her ask timidly that she might be allowed to see her son, a Paris mobile in Company Six, Third Battalion.

"Stay here," said the guard, "and I will call him."

She gave a joyous sigh of relief, and returned to her husband, and both seated themselves at a short distance, on the side of a talus.

They waited there an interminable time. Mont Valérien is so big, such a complicated affair, with its various enclosures, its bastions, glacis, barracks, and casemates! No easy task to find a mobile of the Sixth in the mazes of that town suspended between heaven and earth, hanging its huge spiral in the midst of the clouds, like Laputa's island. Moreover, at that hour from one end to the other of the fort drums and trumpets are sounding, canteens rattling. The sentry is relieved, duty-service begins, supplies are distributed; the sharp-shooters are bringing in a spy, covered with blood, beating him with their gun-butts. Some peasant folk of Nanterre are come to complain to the General; an estafette comes galloping in, the man chilled, and the beast dripping with sweat. Litters arrive from the outposts with the wounded suspended upon the backs of mules, and moaning softly like sick lambs. Sailors are seen hauling a new cannon to the music of a fife, with cries of "Heave ho!" A shepherd in red trousers is driving in before him the cattle belonging to the fort, a rod in his hand, his chassepot slung across his shoulder. In the yards of the fort an incessant coming and going, men passing one another, and disappearing through the postern like figures vanishing through the low door of some caravansary of the East.

"I hope they have not forgotten my boy," the poor mother's eyes are saying all this time; and as the minutes lengthen she rises and discreetly approaches the entrance, casting a furtive glance towards the front yard, while she edges along the

wall, but she dares not ask any more questions, lest she should reflect discredit upon her son. Her companion, more timid even than herself, does not budge once from the spot where he is seated; and when she returns again and again, to seat herself beside him, her heart swelling, and a look of deep discouragement visible upon her features, it is plain that he is chiding her for her impatience, and giving her no end of explanations as to the exigencies of a soldier's life, information imparted with the imbecile air of one who would have you think he knows it all.

I have always regarded with the deepest curiosity those little domestic scenes enacted amid the utmost silence, scenes of whose significance one often divines more than is actually seen, — in those pantomimes of the street, which elbow us on every side during our walks abroad, the merest gesture often revealing to us the history of a lifetime; but what specially charmed me here was the awkwardness, the naïveté of my principal characters, and it was with real emotion I witnessed all the incidents of a delightful drama of the hearth, as I followed that little dumb-show, as expressive and transparent as the pantomime of two of Seraphin's marionettes. I seemed to hear the mother remark one fine morning, "I am sick of this Monsieur Trochu, and his orders. I have not seen my boy for three months. I want to see him, to kiss him."

And the father, timorous, with an eternal air of apology for the fact of his existence, is frightened at the mere thought of what must be done in order

to obtain permission to see the son, and at first attempts to dissuade her. "But, my dear, you don't stop to think! Mont Valérien — deuce take it! — is a long way off. How could you ever get there without a carriage? Besides, it is a citadel. Women are not allowed to enter."

"But — I will enter — " answers the wife; and as he obeys all her commands, he undertakes this new errand. He goes to the *Secteur*, to the *mairie*, to the headquarters of the Army of Paris, to the commissary, clammy with fear, shivering with the cold, knocking at every door, stumbling into the wrong one again and again, waiting in line two hours before the office of one department, and that not the right one. But at last he returns towards evening with the Governor's permit in his pocket. The next day they rise very early, and dress in the cold, by lamp-light. The father nibbles a bit of bread, to fortify himself, but the mother is not hungry. She prefers to breakfast later with her son. And to cheer the poor mobile a little, they pile into the bag both the ordinary provisions of the siege and those reserved for special occasions, chocolate, sweetmeats, and a bottle of wine; they remember everything, even the famous box, an eight-franc box, which they had laid aside religiously for a day of need. At last they have started. When they reach the ramparts, and the gates are opened, they must show their permit. And now it is the wife's turn to be frightened. But she is reassured. The permit, it seems, is quite *en règle*.

"You may pass," says the adjutant on duty.

And not until then does she breathe freely.

"How polite that officer was to us!"

She toddles on, as agile as a young partridge. The man can scarcely keep up with her.

"How fast you walk, my dear!"

But she is not listening to him. Above her Mont Valérien looms against the misty horizon, and beckons to her.

"Come quickly. He is here!"

And now they have reached Mont Valérien, a fresh cause for anxiety. Suppose she should not find him! What if he is not coming, after all!

Suddenly I saw her tremble, clutch the old man's arm, and spring to her feet. In the distance footsteps were heard echoing along the vaulted passage, footsteps which she recognized. It was her son! When he appeared, the entrance to the fort was suddenly illumined for her eyes.

And indeed he was a big, splendid fellow, his bearing erect and vigorous. He came, gun in hand and knapsack on his back. His greeting was sincere, as the joyous, virile voice exclaimed, —

"Good-morning, mamma."

And suddenly knapsack, blanket, chassepot, and all disappeared from sight, and were lost in that enormous bonnet. Then the father's turn came, but it did not last so long, for the bonnet wanted everything for itself. It was insatiable.

"And how are you? Are you clad warmly enough? How are you off for linen?"

And beneath the ruches of that bonnet I could see her eyes, and their prolonged and loving glance

which embraced him from head to foot, amid a shower of tears and little laughs and kisses. For there was an arrearage of three long months due him, — an arrearage which maternal tenderness was striving to pay him all at once. The father too seemed deeply moved, but he did not desire that any one should suspect the fact. He understood that we were watching him, and blinked once or twice in our direction, as if to say, —

"You must excuse her. She 's a woman."

As if I could excuse her!

But the sound of a bugle interrupted all this joy unexpectedly.

"The call!" said the youth. "I must go."

"What! You will not take your breakfast with us?"

"I cannot. I am on duty for the next twenty-four hours, above, at the fort."

"Oh!" said the poor woman, and she was speechless.

And in consternation each gazed at the other for a moment. Then the father was spokesman.

"At least you will take the box," he said in a heart-broken voice, with an air of gluttony and of martyrdom which was at once touching and ludicrous. But in the agitation and emotion of leave-taking, that infernal box was nowhere to be found! It was pathetic to see those feeble and trembling hands groping for it, and to hear two voices, broken by sobs, inquiring: "The box! Where is the box?" — evidently considering this petty and homely detail not unworthy of their great sorrow.

But at last the box was found, there was one long, last embrace, and then the son returned to the fort on the run.

But recall how far they had come to breakfast with him, and that it was to have been a great affair in their lives, that the mother had not slept one minute the night before, in anticipation of it, and tell me whether anything could be more pathetic than that little party which never came off, that momentary glimpse of a paradise whose door was so suddenly, so brutally, closed against them.

They lingered for some minutes, standing motionless in the spot where the boy had left them, their eyes riveted upon the postern through which he had disappeared from their sight. At length the man roused himself, and made a move towards departure. He coughed very courageously two or three times, and his voice gaining confidence, he said quite audibly and cheerfully, —

" Come, mother, let us go." Then he made us an overwhelming courtesy, and took his wife's arm. My eyes followed them as far as the turn in the road. The good man's air was furious. He brandished his bag, and his gestures were full of despair. The mother herself appeared to be calmer. She walked beside him, her head sunken upon her breast, her arms at her side. But I fancied that from time to time the shawl which covered her thin shoulders rose and fell convulsively.

THE SIEGE OF BERLIN.

WE ascended the Avenue des Champs Élysées with Doctor V——, reading, upon those walls pierced with shells and sidewalks dug up with grapeshot, the story of the Siege of Paris. Just before we reached the Rondpoint de l'Étoile, the Doctor paused, and pointing out to me one of those great corner-houses which face the Arc de Triomphe with such a pompous air, he said,—

"Do you see those four closed windows up there over the balcony? In the early part of the month of August of last year, that awful month full of storm and disaster, I was summoned to that apartment to attend a severe case of apoplexy. My patient was Colonel Jouve, an old cuirassier of the First Empire. Love of country was his ruling passion, and his mistress was Glory. At the beginning of the war he had taken up quarters in the Champs Élysées in that apartment with the balcony. Do you guess why? That he might witness the triumphal re-entry of our troops. Poor old man! The news of Wissembourg reached his ears just as he was rising from table. He saw the name of Napoleon at the end of that bulletin of defeat, and the sudden shock prostrated him.

"When I reached the old cuirassier, he was stretched at full length upon the carpet of his

room. His face gave no signs of life, but it was bleeding as if he had received a tremendous blow upon the head. Standing he must have presented an imposing figure. As he lay there, he looked like a giant. His features were so noble, his silvery locks curled so thickly, he had such splendid teeth, that this octogenarian looked scarcely more than sixty years of age. Near him knelt his granddaughter in tears. She resembled him strongly. The sight of both together suggested two beautiful Greek medals struck from the same impression; but one was old and dull, its outlines somewhat worn, while the other was bright and clear-cut, having all the smoothness and brilliancy of a first impression.

"The child's grief touched me. Her grandfather had been a soldier. Her father too was a soldier, an officer of MacMahon's staff; and at sight of this stately old hero prostrate, my imagination pictured a scene not less terrible. I did my best to reassure her, but at heart I felt no hope. We had to deal with a severe case of hemiplegia, and at eighty recovery is extremely doubtful. And, in fact, for three days the sick man never rallied from the stupor in which I had found him. Meanwhile news of the battle Reichshoffen had just reached Paris. You will remember how strangely we were deceived. Until evening we all believed a great victory had been gained, twenty thousand Prussians slain, the prince royal a prisoner. Through some agency scarcely less than miraculous, some echo of the nation's joy must have reached the patient, deaf

and dumb though he was, some magnetic current must have penetrated even that paralyzed frame, for that evening, when I approached his bedside, I saw that he was a new man. His eye was clear almost, his tongue no longer thick. He was able to smile, and twice he stammered 'Vic-to-ry!'

"'Yes, colonel, a great victory!'

"And as I acquainted him with the details of MacMahon's glorious success, his features relaxed, his face brightened.

"As I was about to leave the apartment, I found the young girl waiting for me. She was weeping. 'But he is out of danger!' I said, taking her hands in mine.

"The unhappy child scarcely ventured a reply. The bulletins had just announced the true story of Reichshoffen. MacMahon was retreating, the army cut to pieces. Our eyes could not conceal the consternation both felt. The child was heart-broken. She was thinking of her father. But I trembled at thought of the old man. Surely he could not survive this fresh shock. But what should we do? Leave him to enjoy that happiness, those illusions which had breathed new life into him? But in that case we must feed him upon lies. 'Very well, I will lie to him!' said the young heroine, quickly drying her eyes, and her face was wreathed in smiles when she returned to her grandfather's chamber.

"She had undertaken no light task. During the first days it was not so difficult a matter, for the good man's head was very weak, and he was as

easily deceived as a child. But as health returned, his ideas grew clearer. It was necessary to keep him informed of the movement of the various armies, and to manufacture military bulletins for him. And it was truly pitiable to see that lovely child buried night and day in a map of Germany, pinning tiny flags upon it, endeavoring to invent the details of a glorious campaign. Bazaine had advanced upon Berlin, Froissart was in Bavaria, MacMahon on the Baltic! Sometimes she consulted me, and I aided her as far as I could, but in carrying out this imaginary invasion no one rendered us greater assistance than the grandfather himself. He had conquered Germany so many times during the First Empire! He knew every move in advance. 'This is where they will go next!' 'This will be their next move,' he would say; and his anticipations never failing to prove themselves correct, he took not a little pride in them.

"'But, alas! to no avail did we take cities, win battles. We did not move rapidly enough to suit him. That old man was simply insatiable. Every day I visited him I heard news of some fresh exploit.

"'Doctor, we have taken Mayence,' said the young girl, advancing towards me with a heart-rending smile, and through the door I heard a joyous voice exclaiming, 'We move! we move! in a week more we shall enter Berlin.'

"As a matter of fact, the Prussians would reach Paris in another week. We asked ourselves at

first whether it would not be better to remove our patient from the city, but, once outside of Paris, the condition of France would have told him all; moreover, he was too weak, too much benumbed from the effect of the first shock, to learn the truth then. It was decided to remain.

"The first day of the investment of the city, I climbed up to my patient's apartment. Well I remember that day! My heart was heavy, full of anguish. For the gates of Paris were closed, the enemy under her very walls, and even her outskirts converted into frontiers. I found the ingenuous old man sitting up in bed, proud and jubilant.

"'Well,' he said, 'at last the *siege* has begun!'

"I looked at him; I was stunned. 'Why, colonel,' I asked, 'how do you know that?'

"His granddaughter glanced in my direction.

"'Oh, yes, doctor; this is great news! The siege of Berlin has begun.'

"And as she spoke, she plied her needle with a little affectation of composure. How should he suspect anything? Though the cannons were firing from the forts, he could not hear them. And although unhappy Paris was turned upside down, and filled with gloom and forebodings, he saw nothing of it all. But where he lay, he could get a glimpse of the Arc de Triomphe, and his chamber was filled with bric-à-brac of the First Empire, admirably fitted to nourish his illusions. Portraits of marshals were there, engravings of battles; there was a picture of the *King of Rome* in baby

robes. There were tall, stiff consoles ornamented with trophied brass, and loaded with imperial relics, medallions, bronzes; there was a bit of the rock of St. Helena under a glass globe; there were numerous miniatures always representing the same lady, in ball-room costume, in a yellow robe with leg-of-mutton sleeves, a pair of bright eyes glancing from beneath her carefully curled locks.

"All these ornaments, the King of Rome, the marshals, the yellow ladies, those short-waisted, high-girdled figures whose stiff and artificial lines were considered the very embodiment of grace in 1806 — gallant colonel! — it was such things as those, it was that atmosphere of victory and conquest, which, far more than any words of ours, made him accept the story of the siege of Berlin with such childlike simplicity.

"From that day, our military operations were far less complex. To take Berlin was simply a question of patience. From time to time, when the old man grew weary of waiting, we would read him a letter from his son, of course, an imaginary letter, for Paris was cut off from the outer world then, and, besides, since the battle of Sedan, MacMahon's aide-de-camp was confined in a German fortress. You may imagine that poor child's despair, living from day to day with no news of her father, but knowing that he was a prisoner, deprived of everything, sick, perhaps, — imagine her agony knowing all this, but compelled to speak for him, to invent such joyous epistles in his behalf, a trifle brief, perhaps, but the brevity of a soldier in the field,

who answers his country's cry, 'Forward!' and sees her arms everywhere victorious. Sometimes she had not the heart for these letters, and then weeks passed without news. But the old man would grow restless and could not sleep. Then a letter would at once arrive from Germany, and she would read it gayly at his bedside, repressing her tears. The colonel always listened religiously, with a very wise air; he approved, criticised, explained to us here and there a passage which seemed slightly obscure. But his finest efforts were replies he sent his son. 'Never forget that you are a Frenchman,' he would say. 'Be generous to these poor people. Invade their country, but not as an oppressor.' Then followed suggestions without end, delightful twaddle concerning a right observance of propriety, and what constituted courtesy towards women, — in short, a whole military code for the guidance of these *conquerors;* he added some reflections upon politics in general, and outlined the conditions of peace which must be imposed upon the vanquished. I must add that, as regards the last subject, his demands were not severe.

"'A war indemnity, only that; what good would it do to seize their provinces? A France could never be made out of Germany!'

"He dictated these words with a steady voice, with such candor, and such noble faith in his country, that it was impossible to listen to him unmoved.

"And all the while the siege was progressing, not,

alas! that of Berlin. There were days of severe cold, of bombardment, of epidemics and famine. But, thanks to our cares, our efforts, and all those proofs of indefatigable tenderness which were multiplied about him, the old man never felt a moment's anxiety. To the very end I was able to obtain white bread and fresh meat for him. Of course there was none for any one else, and you cannot imagine anything more touching than this grandfather's breakfasts of which he partook with such innocent egotism, the old man sitting up in bed, fresh and smiling, his napkin under his chin, the granddaughter ever at his side, her pale face revealing the privation she had suffered; she guided his hands, compelled him to drink, aided him as he ate all the good things saved specially for him. Enlivened by his repast, enjoying the comfort of his warm chamber while the cold winter wind blew without, and the snow whirled about his windows, the aged cuirassier would recall his campaigns in the North and related to us for the hundredth time the tale of that mournful retreat from Moscow, when there was no other food than frozen biscuit and horse-flesh.

"'Do you know what that means, child? We ate horse-flesh!' I think she understood perfectly. She had been eating no other meat for two months. From day to day, as convalescence approached, the patient began to make our task a more difficult one. That lethargy of all his senses, of all his limbs, had aided us up to this time, but was beginning to leave him. Several times those terrible

volleys from the Porte Maillot made him start suddenly, his ear as alert as a hound's: we were obliged to invent a final victory for Bazaine before Berlin, and to explain that the salutes in front of Les Invalides were in honor of the event. Another day, when we had pushed his bed close to the window, I think it was the Thursday the battle of Buzenval occurred, he saw the National Guard quite distinctly as it formed in front of the Avenue de la Grande Armée.

"'What troops are those?' asked our colonel, and we heard him mutter to himself, —

"'Badly drilled! badly drilled!'

"Nothing came of this incident, but we realized that it now behooved us to take greater precautions than before. Unfortunately we were not cautious enough.

"One evening on my arrival, the child came to me, her face full of anxiety.

"'To-morrow they enter,' she said.

"Was the door of the grandfather's room ajar? I do remember, and have often thought in recalling that evening, that his features wore an unusual expression. It is very likely that he had heard what we were saying. But we were speaking of the Prussians, and he was thinking of the French army, and of that triumphal entry he had been expecting for many a day, — MacMahon descending the avenue to martial music, along a path strewn with flowers, his son at the marshal's side, and there upon the balcony, the old warrior himself in full uniform, as upon the field of Lutzen, saluting the

flags that had many a rent in them, and our eagles blackened with powder.

"Poor Father Jouve! Doubtless he fancied we would not permit him to assist at that entry of our troops, anxious to spare him the excitement of so great an event. For he said nothing to any one, but the following day, just at the hour when the Prussians advanced somewhat timidly upon the long avenue leading from the Porte Maillot to the Tuileries, an upper window opened softly, and the colonel himself appeared upon the balcony, wearing his helmet, his long cavalry sword, and all the antiquated but glorious toggery of an old cuirassier of Milhaud. I still ask myself what tremendous effort of his will, what sudden start of life, had put him on his feet again, and in all his war trappings. But one fact is certain. There he stood upon the balcony, amazed to find the avenue so wide and still, the blinds of the houses closed, and Paris itself as gloomy as a vast lazaretto, flags everywhere, but strangely enough, only white flags with red crosses, and no one to meet our soldiers.

"For a moment he must have believed he had made a mistake,— but, no! yonder, behind the Arc de Triomphe, issued an indistinct rattle, a black line advanced steadily into the morning light. Then by degrees the tops of helmets could be seen flashing in the sunlight, and the drums of Jena began to beat. And then beneath the Arc de l'Étoile, accented by the rhythmic tramp of the regiments and the clashing of sabres, resounded the strains of Schubert's triumphal march.

"Then through the dismal silence of the place was heard an awful cry, 'To arms! to arms! the Prussians!' and the four uhlans of the advance-guard, looking towards the balcony above, could see the majestic figure of an old man reeling, his arms outstretched. He fell heavily. This time the shock had indeed proved fatal. Colonel Jouve was dead."

A RENEGADE ZOUAVE.

THAT evening the big blacksmith Lory of Sainte-Marie-aux-Mines was not in the best of humors. Usually after the forge-fire was out, and the sun had set, he would sit upon a bench before his doorway, tasting all the delight of that weariness which comes to one who has borne the heat and burden of the day. And before dismissing his apprentices, he would linger with them for a few draughts of fresh beer, watching the people going home from the factories. But this evening the worthy smith remained in his shop until meal-time, and then he seemed reluctant to go. His good old wife thought as she looked at him, "What ails him? Has he received some bad news he is unwilling to tell me, from the regiment? Perhaps our oldest is ill." But she did not venture to ask any questions, and confined all her efforts to quieting three little laughing, fair-haired lads with locks the color of ripened wheat, who were crunching a fine salad of black radishes and cream.

At length the blacksmith pushed away his plate angrily.

"Oh, what beggarly knaves, what scoundrels they are!"

"Whom do you mean, tell us, Lory?"

"Whom do I mean?" he exclaimed. "Five or six vagabonds who straggled into the town this morning, wearing the uniforms of French soldiers, but hand in glove with the Bavarians: some of that mob which has — what do they call it? — declared in favor of Prussia; and to think that every day will witness the return of more of these false Alsatians! What do you suppose they gave them to drink?"

The mother attempted a defence.

"What would you have, my poor man? These boys are not so much to blame. Away in Algeria, in Africa, they are so far from home that they grow sick for a sight of it. The temptation to return, to give up a soldier's life, is too strong for them."

Lory's fist descended heavily upon the table.

"No more, mother! You women do not know what you are talking about. So much of your life is spent among children, and for them alone, that you come to see all things through the eyes of your puppets. But I tell you, those men we saw this morning are knaves, renegades, cowards of the worst sort; and if in an evil hour our Christian could be capable of such infamy as theirs, as sure as my name is George Lory, and I was for seven years a chasseur in the service of France, I would run him through the body with my sabre."

Partly risen from his chair, the blacksmith pointed with a terrible glance to his long cavalry sword, hanging upon the wall under his son's picture, the portrait of a zouave, done in Africa.

But as he looked at that honest Alsatian face, dark and sunburnt, viewed in the strong relief which is shown when vivid colors are seen in a strong light, suddenly he grew calm.

"I am foolish to work myself into a passion! As if our Christian could dream of becoming a Prussian, — he who has killed so many of them during the war."

Restored to good humor by this thought, the worthy man finished his meal with a light heart, and set forth at once for the Ville de Strasbourg, to empty a pot or two of beer.

The old wife was alone. She put the little ones to bed, while they chirped like a nestful of birds going to rest, and then she took her darning, and seated herself before the door leading to the garden. She sighed from time to time, and thought to herself, —

"Oh, yes; that is all true enough. They are cowards, renegades. All the same, their mothers must be glad enough to see them again."

And she recalled the time when her boy, before he left for the army, stood in that little garden, tending it, at that very hour. She looked at the well where he had refilled his watering-pots, — that boy in the blouse and long locks, those locks which had to be cut when he entered the ranks of the zouaves.

Suddenly she trembles. The little back door that leads to the fields is opened.

The dogs do not bark, though the new-comer steals along the walls, among the beehives, like a robber.

"Good-day, mamma!"

Her Christian himself stands before her, shamefaced, confused; his tongue is thick, his uniform disordered.

The miserable creature has come with the others, and for a whole hour he has been prowling about, waiting for his father to leave the house, that he might enter it. She would chide him, but has not the heart. It is such a long while since she saw him, embraced him last. And then he has so many and such excellent reasons to give for returning, — he longed for home, for the forge, was weary of living so far away from his people; the discipline grew severer every day, and the others nicknamed him "Prussian!" because of his Alsatian accent. Of course she believes everything he says. How can she help it when she looks in his face? They continue to talk, as they enter the house.

The little ones are awake by this time, and, barefooted, in their night-shirts, they patter into the room, eager to welcome their big brother! He must eat something, but, no, he is not hungry. His thirst, however, knows no end; he has been drinking in the pothouse since morning, treated to round upon round of beer and white wine, and now he washes it all down with great gulps of water.

But a step is heard in the yard. The blacksmith is returning.

"Christian, it is your father! Quick, hide, until I have had time to speak to him, to explain!"

And she pushes him behind the tall porcelain

stove, and then turns to her sewing again with trembling hands. But, unfortunately, his zouave's cap is still upon the table, and that is the first object Lory's eyes meet as he enters. He observes, too, the mother's embarrassment, her pale face, and he understands everything.

"Christian is here!" he says; and the tone of his voice strikes terror to their hearts. He seizes his sabre with the gesture of a maniac, and rushes towards the stove behind which the zouave cowers, a ghastly figure, suddenly sobered, but leaning against the wall, lest he should fall.

The mother throws herself between them.

"Lory, Lory, do not kill him! It is my fault. I wrote him to return, wrote him that you needed him in the forge."

She clings to his arm and drags herself along, sobbing. In the darkness of their chamber the children hear sobs and angry words; these voices, overcome with emotion, they no longer recognize, and they too begin to cry. Suddenly the blacksmith pauses, and looks at his wife.

"Then he returned because you made him! Very well! Let him get to bed. To-morrow I will consider what shall be done."

On awaking the next morning from a heavy slumber, full of nightmare and baseless terrors, Christian finds himself in the very chamber he occupied in childhood. The flowering hop-vines, climbing along the tiny leaden-framed panes of his window, shut out some of the daylight, but the sun is warm, for already it is high in the heavens.

Below, the anvils are ringing. At the head of his bed sits his mother. Through the long night, she has not quitted his side one moment, for her husband's wrath has made her fear. And the old man himself has not slept. Till daybreak his footsteps are heard through the house; he opens and closes one closet after another, weeping and sighing. And now he enters his son's room. His face is stern. It seems that he is dressed for a journey. He wears a tall hat and long gaiters; he carries a thick mountain-staff tipped with iron. He proceeds at once to the bed where his son lies, saying, "Come, rise! It is time to get up!"

The youth, a trifle confused, is about to put on his Zouave trappings.

"Oh, no, not those!" the father says severely.

The mother, all apprehension, replies, "But, my friend, he has no others to wear."

"Give him some of mine. I shall not need them any more."

And as his son dresses, Lory carefully folds the uniform, the big red trousers, the short jacket, and having made a bundle of them, he passes about his neck the tin box which contains his soldier's-papers.

"And now let us go down," he says. Then the three descend into the blacksmith's shop. No word is spoken. As they enter, they hear the bellows blowing. Every one is at work. And as he sees that open shed which he had so often recalled while he was far away, the Zouave remembers his childhood, and how he played there many

an hour in the heat of the road, and how the sparks glittered against the black, powdery dust of the forge. Sudden tenderness fills his heart. He longs for his father's forgiveness, but the look which meets his is inexorable.

And now the smith finds words.

"Boy," he says, "the forge and the tools are yours. And that too," he adds, pointing to the little garden in the rear, which is seen from the smoke-blackened door, bathed in sunshine, and swarming with bees.

"The hives, the vines, the house, all belong to you. Since it was for these things you sacrificed your honor, you will at least look after them. You are master here now. I go. You owe France five years more of service. I will pay your debt."

"Lory, Lory, where are you going?" cries the poor wife.

"Father!" exclaims the son, his voice full of entreaty. But the blacksmith is gone while they are speaking. He strides out of sight without one glance backward.

At Sidi-bel-Abbès, where the Third Regiment of Zouaves is stationed, there enlisted some days ago a volunteer aged fifty-five years.

THE CLOCK OF BOUGIVAL.

FROM BOUGIVAL TO MUNICH.

IT was a clock of the Second Empire, one of those timepieces in Algerian onyx, ornamented with Campana designs, — such a clock as may be purchased on the Boulevard des Italiens, its tiny gilt key dangling crosswise at the end of a pink ribbon. A genuine Parisian novelty, the frailest, daintiest, most modern of things, — a real opera bouffe clock, chiming with a charming silvery sweetness, but possessing not one least grain of common-sense, and full of caprices and crotchets, striking the hours after an impossible fashion of its own, skipping the half-hours, just knowing enough to announce for Monsieur the hour when he must go to the Bourse, and for Madame the propitious, eagerly awaited moment. When the war broke out, this timepiece was rusticating at Bougival, created especially for one of those fragile summer-palaces, those butterfly cages, with paper frills, — migratory establishments that are not meant to outlast a season, but adorned with lace, muslin, and light silken transparencies. After the arrival of the Bavarians it was one of the first prizes to be carried off, and really it must be acknowledged that these people from over the Rhine had no little

skill at packing, for that plaything of a clock, scarcely bigger than a turtle-dove's egg, was able to make that journey from Bougival to Munich, in the midst of Krupp guns and carts loaded with grapeshot, arriving safe and sound, and on the very next day showed its face in the shop-window of Augustus Cahn, dealer in curiosities, Odeon-Platz, as fresh, as coquettish as ever, with its two delicate hands black and curved as two eyelashes, and its gilt key still dangling crosswise at the end of a new ribbon.

THE ILLUSTRIOUS DOCTOR-PROFESSOR OTTO VON SCHWANTHALER.

THIS arrival was an event for Munich. No one there had ever seen a Bougival clock before; every one came to look at it, regarding it with as much curiosity as the Japanese shells in the Siebold museum afforded. In front of Augustus Cahn's store spectators stood three rows deep, smoking their pipes from morning till night, and the good people of Munich, their eyes bulging out of their heads, asked each other with many an astounded "*Mein Gott!*" to what use this singular little machine might be put. Illustrated journals printed pictures of it. Its photograph was in every window, and in its honor did the illustrious Doctor-Professor Otto von Schwanthaler compose his famous *Paradox upon Clocks*, a philosophico-humoristic study of six

hundred pages, which treats of the influence of clocks upon the character of various nationalities, and logically demonstrates that a nation so senseless as to regulate the employment of its time by such erratic chronometers as that clock of Bougival, could no more expect to escape every sort of catastrophe than a ship which should put to sea with its compass gone astray. (The phrase is a trifle long, but I have translated it literally.)

Once engaged upon an investigation, the Germans do not trifle with it, and before writing his *Paradox*, the illustrious Doctor-Professor was anxious to have the subject of his researches under his eyes, that he might study it thoroughly, and analyze it to the minutest details, with the zeal of an entomologist; and so he purchased the clock, and that explains how it passed from Augustus Cahn's store into the salon of the illustrious Doctor-Professor Otto von Schwanthaler, custodian of the Pinakothek, and member of the Academy of Sciences and Fine Arts, and was installed in his private residence, 24 Ludwigstrasse.

THE SCHWANTHALER SALON.

THAT which one was sure to observe first of all in entering the Schwanthaler salon, solemn and academic as a conference-hall, was a tall marble clock, severely classic in detail, but having a bronze Polymnia, and extremely complicated machinery.

Its large face encircled a number of smaller ones; the hours, the minutes, and the seasons were represented; the equinoxes and even the phases of the moon could be seen in a bright blue cloud on the base of this timepiece, in the centre. The sound of this mighty machine filled the whole house. Even at the foot of the stairs, its pendulum could be heard, swinging ponderously to and fro, with solemn emphasis, seeming to measure and divide life itself into fragments of equal length. Through that sonorous tick-tock throbbed the vibrations of the hand which marked the seconds, as it went round and round its face, with the feverish energy of a spider fully aware of the value of time.

Then the hour would strike sadly and slowly as a college-clock, and its striking always announced some event in the Schwanthaler household. At that precise moment Herr von Schwanthaler set out for the Pinakothek, loaded with papers, or his honored lady had just returned from a sermon with her daughters, three lank, much-befrilled girls, who looked like hop-poles; sometimes the clock announced that it was time for the dancing-lesson, the zither lesson, or for gymnastics; prompt on the hour, the piano was opened, the embroidery-frame brought forth, or music-stands were rolled into the salon, and ensemble-music began; and every act of this household was so methodical, orderly, and well-regulated that the spectator who observed all these Schwanthalers set in motion on the exact stroke of the clock, coming in or going

out through the opened folding-doors, might have fancied he saw before him that procession of the Apostles in the Clock of Strasbourg, might have expected that upon the last stroke the entire Schwanthaler family would re-enter and disappear forever in their clock.

SINGULAR INFLUENCE OF THE BOUGIVAL CLOCK UPON AN HONEST FAMILY OF MUNICH.

NOW it was beside that monument they placed the clock from Bougival, and you can easily imagine the effect that saucy bit of fragile finery produced! One evening, as the Schwanthaler ladies were busied with their embroidery in the large salon, and the illustrious Doctor-Professor was reading to some of his colleagues of the Academy of Sciences the first pages of the *Paradox*, pausing from time to time to lift the little clock and to make, as it were, a blackboard demonstration concerning it, suddenly Eva von Schwanthaler, impelled by I know not what accursed curiosity, said to her father, blushing slightly, —

" O papa, make it ring! "

The doctor detached the key, turned it twice, and a crystalline sound was heard, so silvery, clear, and bright that a sudden quiver of gaiety passed through that solemn assemblage. All eyes sparkled.

"Is n't it pretty, is n't it pretty?" exclaimed the young ladies, tossing their braids with such a lively little air that one could scarcely recognize them.

Then Herr von Schwanthaler observed triumphantly, —

"Look at that crazy little French clock! It has just struck eight, and the hour-hand is at three."

Every one laughed at this, and notwithstanding the lateness of the hour, the gentlemen plunged into philosophical theories and interminable reflections upon the frivolity of the French people. Every one forgot that it was time to go home, deaf even to Polymnia's dial announcing ominously that it was ten o'clock, the hour which ordinarily dispersed the assembled guests. The great clock could not understand what it all meant. Never before had it seen such hilarity in the Schwanthaler residence; never had it seen people lingering so late in the salon. And, shocking to relate, when the Misses Schwanthaler had retired to their room, they had sat up so late, and laughed so much, that they felt a hollow, empty sensation in the stomach, as if they were really hungry, and the sentimental Minna herself, with arms outstretched, exclaimed, —

"Ah, I believe I could eat a lobster-claw!"

"LET US BE GAY, CHILDREN, LET US BE GAY!"

ONCE it was wound up, the Bougival clock fell into its old, irregular life, its habits of dissipation.

They had begun by laughing at its crotchets, but by degrees, growing accustomed to that charming chime, which sounded according to caprice and never told the right time, the serious Schwanthaler family lost all regard for time, and spent their days with delightful unconcern. They thought now of nothing but amusement. Human life seemed so short, since they no longer kept run of the hours. Everything was turned upside down. No more sermons, no more studies! They felt the need of excitement, of stir. Mendelssohn and Schumann had grown too monotonous, and were replaced with *La Grande Duchesse*, and *Le Petit Faust*, and the Fräuleins strummed and strummed and danced, while even the illustrious Doctor-Professor, seized with a sort of vertigo, was able only to say, "Let us be gay, children, let us be gay!" As for the big clock, it was a thing of the past. The young ladies had stopped the pendulum, pretending that it kept them from sleeping, and the household was run according to the caprice of that timepiece which struck one hour when it marked another.

And then appeared the famous *Paradox upon Clocks*. On this occasion the Schwanthalers gave a great soirée, not one of those academic evenings such as they once enjoyed, quiet, and not too brilliant, but a magnificent masquerade-ball, at which Frau von Schwanthaler and her three daughters appeared as *canotières* of Bougival, bare-armed and in short skirts and tiny hats with gaudy ribbons. All this was soon the talk of the town, but it was merely the beginning. Tableaux-vivants,

late suppers and baccarat, — scandalized Munich witnessed one thing after another that winter in the academician's salon. "Let us be gay, children, let us be gay!" repeated the poor man, utterly distracted, and, indeed, they were all extremely gay. Frau von Schwanthaler, become fashionable since her success as a *canotière*, passed her days upon the Isar, wearing extravagant costumes. Her daughters, left at home, took French lessons of some hussar officers imprisoned in the city, and the little clock, having every reason for believing itself still at Bougival, continued to ring at random, always striking eight when the hand stood at three. At last, one morning, this mad whirl of folly carried off the entire Schwanthaler family to America, and the finest Titians of the Pinakothek followed their illustrious custodian in his flight.

CONCLUSION.

AFTER the departure of the Schwanthalers, a perfect epidemic of scandals broke out in Munich. First, a canoness eloped with a baritone; the Dean of the Institute wedded a ballet-dancer; an Aulic councillor was caught cheating at cards; and the convent established for noble women was closed because of a nocturnal disturbance.

Oh, depravity of inanimate things! It would seem that this little clock had some magic power, and that it had resolved to bewitch all Bavaria. Wherever it went, wherever that giddy but charm-

ing little chime sounded, it distracted people, turned their heads. At last, passing from one place to another, it took up its abode in the Royal Residence. And since that day, do you know the name of that score which lies, always open, upon the piano of King Louis, the rabid Wagnerian?

"*Die Meistersänger?*"

"No! *Le Phoque à ventre blanc!* Just the thing to teach them how to use our clocks!"

THE DEFENCE OF TARASCON.

GOD be praised! at last, news of Tarascon! For five months I have merely existed, such was my state of suspense! Knowing the exaltation of that good town, knowing the bellicose humor of its inhabitants, I said to myself again and again, Who can tell what Tarascon has been doing? May it not have rushed in a body upon the barbarians, been bombarded like Strasbourg, burned alive like Châteaudun? Perhaps, like Paris, it is dying of hunger! Perhaps, like Laôn and its intrepid citadel, it has been blown up in a savage paroxysm of patriotism. None of these things, my friends. Tarascon has not been burned, Tarascon is not blown up! Tarascon is where it has always been, its peaceful site surrounded by vineyards, the glad sunshine flooding its streets, its cellars full of fine Muscat, and the Rhône, which bathes that amiable locality, bears to the sea, as of old, the image of a prosperous town; and on the river's shining surface may still be seen the reflection of green blinds, and well-raked gardens, and militia, in new coats, drilling all along the quay.

But do not suppose for a moment that Tarascon has been sitting with hands folded during the war. On the contrary, it has behaved admirably, and its

heroic resistance, which I shall attempt to describe to you, deserves its place in history as a type of local resistance, a living symbol of the defence of the South!

THE SINGING-SOCIETIES.

I WILL admit that, until Sedan was fought, our gallant Tarasconians stayed at home, and their sentiments were quite peaceful. These proud sons of the Alpilles never considered that possibly the Fatherland had received its death-blow on this battlefield. It was the Empire, and the Emperor's soldiers that were perishing. But once the Fourth of September had come and the Republic, with Attila encamped about Paris, ah! then it was that Tarascon awoke, and perceived this was naught else than a national war! Of course it began with a demonstration on the part of the Singing-Societies. You know what a passion for music they have in the South. At Tarascon especially it becomes a perfect frenzy. In the streets, as you pass, all the windows are singing at you, and every balcony drops romantic lays upon your head!

No matter what shop you enter, at the desk there is always a guitar sighing, and even the apothecary's boys, as they serve you, whistle "The Nightingale," and "The Spanish Lute" — *Tra la la! la la la!* And, as if these private concerts were not enough, the Tarasconese have also a town brass band, a college band, and I dare not say how many singing-societies.

It was Saint Christopher's singing-society and its admirable three-part chorus, "On, to save France!" which struck the first note of the national movement.

"Yes, yes! — On to save France!" cried the worthy Tarasconian, and handkerchiefs were waved from the windows, and men clapped their hands, and women threw kisses to the harmonious phalanx, which paraded the Esplanade, marching four rows deep, keeping step proudly, a banner at its head. An impetus had been given to the movement. From that day no more barcarolles, no more pensive sighing of guitars. Everywhere "The Spanish Lute" yielded to "The Marseillaise," and twice every week people were almost smothered upon the Esplanade, where they gathered to listen to the college band playing the *Chant du Départ*. Fabulous prices were paid for seats.

But the Tarasconese did not stop at that.

THE CAVALCADES.

AFTER the demonstration of the singing-societies, there were historical cavalcades for the benefit of the wounded. What more pleasing sight than that presented upon a bright Sabbath-day, when all the valorous youth of Tarascon might be seen, in hunting-boots and light tights, soliciting contributions from door to door, and caracoling under the balconies, armed with halberds and butterfly-nets! But finest of all was a patriotic tournament,

— Francis I. at the battle of Pavia. This was held thrice in succession on the Esplanade by the gentlemen of the Club. He who missed that sight has not lived! The Marseilles Theatre loaned the costumes. Gold and silk and velvet, embroidered standards, shields and helmets, caparisons, ribbons, bow-knots, rosettes, lance-heads, and breastplates, made the Esplanade flash and glitter like a mirror for enticing larks. And then a strong, sudden breath of the Mistral, which handled all this splendor somewhat roughly. It was indeed a magnificent sight. But, unfortunately, when, after a fierce contest, Francis I. — Monsieur Bompard, director of the Club — found that he was surrounded by a body of Reiters, the luckless Bompard, in surrendering his sword, did so with a shrug of the shoulders so enigmatic that, instead of announcing "All is lost save honor!" it seemed rather to say: "Digo-li que vengue, moun bon!"[1] But the Tarasconese were not too close observers, and patriotic tears sparkled in every eye.

THE BREACH.

With such spectacles as these, such songs, amid such glory of river and sky, no wonder all heads were turned. And their exaltation reached its highest point upon reading the Government Bulletins. People accosted each other upon the Esplanade with a threatening air, their teeth tightly closed, chewing their words like bullets. Their

[1] Provençal. "Tell him to come on, my brave!"

conversations smelt of powder. There was saltpetre in the air! And, above all, one should have heard these effervescent Tarasconians at a breakfast in the *Café de la Comédie.*

They would exclaim, "What are they doing, these Parisians, with that *tron de Dieu* General Trochu of theirs? They will never, never cut through the enemy! *Coquin de bon sort!* If now it was Tarascon! *Trrr!* Long ago we would have made a breach!" and while Paris was choking upon its oat-bread, these gentlemen devoured succulent red-legged partridges, washing them down with the good wine of Avignon, and when they had eaten till they could eat no more, their shining faces steeped in gravy up to the ears, they would shout like deaf men, striking the table vigorously, "A breach there! Make a breach, why don't you?" And really, they were quite right about it!

THE CLUB'S DEFENCE.

MEANWHILE the barbarian invasion was gradually gaining southward. Dijon taken, Lyon was threatened, and already the Uhlans' mares had caught a whiff of the fragrant fields of the Rhône Valley, and neighed longingly for them. "Let us organize our defence," said the Tarasconese, and every one set to work. In an instant the town was protected, barricaded, casemated. Every house became a fortress. At Costecalde's, the gunsmith, there was in front of the shop, a trench two metres

wide, with a drawbridge too, — really a charming affair! At the Club the defensive works were of such magnitude that every one visited them, moved by curiosity. Monsieur Bompard, the Club's director, stood at the head of the stairway, his chassepot in one hand, and furnished explanations to the ladies. "If they should approach on this side, piff! paff! If, on the other hand, they come from that direction, piff! paff!" And at every street-corner people would stop you with a mysterious air, and tell you, "The *Café de la Comédie* is impregnable!" or even more mysteriously, "They have just put torpedoes under the Esplanade!" Certainly the barbarians might do well to reflect!

THE SHARP-SHOOTERS.

AT the same time companies of sharp-shooters were organized with an enthusiasm amounting to frenzy. *Brothers of Death, Narbonnese Jackals, Blunderbussers of the Rhône,* — they had all sorts of titles and colors, like the centaurea in a field of oats; and such panaches, and cock's-plumes, gigantic hats, and enormous belts! That he might have a more formidable air, every sharp-shooter allowed his moustache and beard to grow, so that one acquaintance could no longer recognize another if they met, out for a walk. At a distance you would sight a brigand of the Abruzzi, bearing down upon you with flaming eyes, bristling moustache, and a rattling of sabres, revolvers, and

yataghans; and when he came nearer it was only Pégoulade, the collector. Another time you would encounter on the stairway Robinson Crusoe himself, with his pointed hat, saw-toothed cutlass, and gun upon his shoulder, but, after all, it was only the gunsmith Costecalde, returning from town where he had been dining. But, the worst of it was that in giving themselves such a ferocious appearance, the Tarasconese actually became frightened of themselves, and soon no one dared walk abroad.

WILD RABBITS AND TAME RABBITS.

THE Bordeaux decree for the organization of the national guards put an end to this intolerable situation. At the powerful bidding of the triumvirs, *prrrt!* the cock's-plumes suddenly vanished, and Jackals, Blunderbussers, and others presented themselves to be made into honest militia-men, under orders of the gallant General Bravida, aged Captain of the Wardrobe. Now ensued new complications. The Bordeaux decree, as you know, recognized two classes in the national guards, the national guard that was to form part of the moving army, and the *sédentaires*,—"the wild rabbits, and the tame rabbits," as Pégoulade the collector observed drolly enough. At first, while the companies were forming, those of the guard who were wild rabbits naturally had the leading rôle to play. Every morning they drilled upon the Esplanade, gallant General Bravida at their

head; there was firing and skirmishing — "*Couchez-vous! levez-vous!*" — and divers orders. These sham-fights attracted crowds of spectators. The ladies of Tarascon would not miss a single one of them, and even the ladies from Beaucaire would sometimes cross the bridge, just to admire our rabbits. All this time, those poor tame rabbits of the national guard modestly did duty-service in the town, and were on guard before the museum, where there was nothing to guard but an old lizard stuffed with moss, and two falcons of the time of good King René; and besides, the Beaucaire ladies never crossed the bridge to see them! But after three months of skirmishing, when it was perceived that the wild rabbits of the national guard never once budged from the Esplanade, the popular enthusiasm began to cool.

All in vain did General Bravida cry to his rabbits, "*Couchez-vous! levez-vous!*" No one watched them now, and soon these mock-skirmishes were the laughing-stock of the town. Heaven knows, it was not the fault of these unfortunate rabbits that they received no marching orders. They were mad enough about it. At last one day they refused to drill.

"No more parade!" they cried with patriotic fervor; "we are the moving army, and we want to march!"

"And so you shall, or my name will not be Bravida!" exclaimed the gallant general, and swelling with anger he went to the *mairie*, and demanded an explanation. At the *mairie*, he was told no

orders had been received; it was for the prefecture to give them.

"To the prefecture, then, I will go," said Bravida; and a little later he was on the express, bound for Marseilles, in search of the prefect. Now this was no easy matter, for at Marseilles there are five or six prefects permanently located, and none who can tell you which one of them all is the special prefect with whom you have to do. However, by a stroke of good luck, Bravida put his hand upon the right one at the first moment, for all the prefects were assembled in council, when the gallant general addressed them in the name of his men, and with all the authority of a veteran Captain of the Wardrobe.

But after he had spoken a few words, the prefect interrupted him, —

"Pardon, general, but how is it that your soldiers ask you that they may be allowed to move, while they ask me for permission to stay at home! Read this."

And with a smile upon his lips, he tendered the general a most pathetic petition addressed to the prefecture, emanating from two of the wild rabbits, the very ones who had displayed the most furious zeal for marching; the petition contained a postscript from the doctor, from the priest, and from the notary of the town, and the petitioners requested that on account of physical infirmities they might be permitted to join the ranks of the tame rabbits.

"And I have more than three hundred just like

them," added the prefect, still smiling. "Now you understand, general, why we have not pressed your men to march. Unfortunately, too many already have been compelled to move, when they wanted to stay at home. No more of that! And so, God save the Republic! and — good luck to your rabbits!"

THE FAREWELL PUNCH.

IT need not be said that the general returned to Tarascon crestfallen. But now for another story! What had the Tarasconese done during his absence? They had actually completed all the arrangements for a farewell punch, by subscription, for the rabbits who were about to leave! All to no purpose did the gallant General Bravida inform them that they need not take the trouble, that no one was going to leave. The punch was subscribed for, ordered; nothing remained now but to drink it, and they did. And so, one Sunday evening, that touching ceremony of drinking the farewell punch took place in the rooms of the *mairie*, and through the small hours toasts, vivats, addresses, and patriotic songs made the windows of the municipal building tremble. Every one knew, of course, how much significance this farewell punch had. The tame rabbits of the guard, who had paid for it, were strongly convinced that their comrades had no intention of leaving. The wild rabbits, who drank the punch, were of the same conviction, and the

venerable deputy-mayor, who, in a voice trembling with emotion, protested in the hearing of all these braves that he was ready to march at their head, knew better than any other there that they were not to march at all. But what difference did that make? These *méridionaux* are such extraordinary creatures that before the farewell punch was finished everybody was in tears, every one embracing his neighbor, and, strangest of all, everybody was sincere about it, even the general.

At Tarascon, as indeed throughout all the South of France, I have frequently observed this result of mirage.

BÉLISAIRE'S PRUSSIAN.

HERE is an incident I heard related in a pot-house at Montmartre. To repeat it to you as it was told, I ought to have the local vocabulary of Master Bélisaire, his big carpenter's apron, and two or three draughts of that fine white wine of Montmartre, which can give a Parisian accent even to a Frenchman from Marseilles! Then I should be sure the same shiver would pass through your veins as thrilled mine in hearing Bélisaire narrate to a tableful of companions this lugubrious and veritable story.

"It was the day after the amnesty" ("the *armistice*," Bélisaire would say). "My wife had sent us both, the boy and me, to take a walk around Villeneuve-la-Garenne, for we had a little shanty there, at the river's edge, and we had been without news of it ever since the siege began. I was bothered at having to take the boy along, for I knew we should run into the Prussians, and as I had never met any of them before, I felt sure that something would happen. But the mother stuck to her idea, and said 'Go, go! then the child will get an airing.'

"And indeed the poor thing needed one badly enough, after five months of siege and mildew!

And so we both started out for the country. Maybe the brat was n't pleased to find out that there were still trees and birds; maybe he did n't paddle through the plough-lands! But I did n't enjoy myself quite so much. There were too many helmets along the road. From the canal to the Island I saw nothing else. Insolent dogs! one had to hold on to himself with all his might to keep from hammering one or two! But, you may believe, I nearly boiled over when I entered Villeneuve, and saw our poor gardens completely ruined, our houses open, turned inside out, and those bandits making themselves at home in our quarters, calling from window to window, hanging their woollen shirts upon our shutters and trellises. Luckily the child was at my side, and when my hand itched too much I thought as I looked at him: 'Keep cool, Bélisaire. Look out that no harm happens to the youngster!' Only that saved me from making a fool of myself. I understood then why the mother wanted me to take him along.

"Our shanty stood at the end of the road, last one on the right hand, on the quay. I found it had been emptied from top to bottom, just like the others. Not a bit of furniture, not so much as a pane of glass left. Only a few bundles of straw; the last leg of the big arm-chair was crackling in the chimney-place. I scented Prussians everywhere, but could n't see one. Then it did seem to me that I heard something stirring down in the basement. I had a little bench there, where I amused myself of a Sunday at odd jobs. I told

the boy to wait for me where he was, and I went downstairs to look for myself.

"No sooner had I opened the door than one of William's soldiers, a big brute of a fellow, sprang with a snort from beneath a pile of shavings, and rushed towards me, his eyes starting from his head, and with all manner of oaths I understood not a word of! He must have felt out of sorts when he awoke, for at the first word I attempted to say, he started to draw his sword.

"I was struck of a heap. All the spleen which had been gathering for the last hour was uppermost. I gripped the big iron clamp of the bench, and I struck. You know, comrades, that Bélisaire's fist is no light one on ordinary occasions, but that day it seemed as if I had the Almighty's thunderbolts at the end of my arm. The very first blow knocked my Prussian silly. There he lay, sprawling at full length. I thought he was only stunned. Well, yes! stunned he was, done for, my boys. The neatest, cleanest bit of work! — as if he'd been washed in potash. What do you say to that, eh?

"And I, who had never killed anything in my life before, not so much as a lark! It seemed queer enough to see that big carcass stretched in front of me. My word for it, he was a fair, handsome fellow, with a funny little beard, that curled just like ash shavings. My legs shook under me as I looked at him. By this time, the boy had grown tired upstairs, and I heard him crying at the full strength of his lungs, 'Papa, papa!'

"The Prussians were passing along the road; I could catch a glimpse of their sabres and their big legs through the air-hole of the basement. Suddenly it occurred to me: 'If they get in, the child is lost! They'll kill every one they find. That was the end of it. I trembled no longer. I shoved my Prussian hastily under the bench, covering him with everything I could find, boards and sawdust and shavings; then I went upstairs to find the boy.

"'Come along.'

"'What's the matter, papa? How pale you look!'

"'Come, come!'

"And I can tell you, if those Cossacks had turned me upside down, searched me through and through, I'd have offered no objection. It seemed to me every moment that I heard some one running, crying, at our backs; once I heard a horse, close upon us, going at a gallop. It startled me so I thought I should drop. But after the bridge was passed, I dared to look about me, and knew where I was again. Saint-Denis was full of people. There was no danger of our being fished out of that crowd. Then for the first time I thought of our poor shanty. Very likely the Prussians would set fire to it when they discovered their comrade; and besides, my neighbor Jacquot, the river-keeper, was the only Frenchman in that neighborhood now, and it would surely make trouble for him when it was found that a soldier had been killed almost at his door. It was a shabby trick I had served him, running off in that fashion.

"I might at least have put my man where he would n't be found. As I came nearer Paris, that thought pestered me more and more. I don't deny it made me uneasy to think I had left that Prussian there in my cellar. When I reached the rampart, I could n't stand it any longer.

"'Go ahead,' I said to the youngster. 'I have a customer I must see at Saint-Denis.'

"Then I kissed him, and turned back. My heart beat a little faster than usual, but what did that matter? I was relieved to think the boy was not with me.

"As I approached Villeneuve, night was coming on. I kept my eye open, you may be sure, and my head looked out for my heels. The country was quiet enough. I could see the shanty, just where it always was, there in the fog. Along the quay stretched a long, black line. It was the Prussians, mustering. I had a good chance of finding the house empty.

"As I slipped along the enclosures, I saw Father Jacquot in his yard, spreading his nets. Surely nothing had been discovered so far. I entered our place, and went down cellar, feeling my way along. I found my Prussian was still under his shavings. Two big rats were tugging away at his helmet, and it gave me quite a start to hear that chin-piece moving. For a moment I thought that the dead man had come to life again, but no! his head was heavy and cold. I hid in a corner, and waited. My idea was to throw the body into the Seine, after the others had fallen asleep.

"I don't know whether it was because that corpse was so close to me, but the tattoo of the Prussians sounded infernally doleful to me that evening. Three great trumpet blasts at once, and '*Ta, ta, ta*—' a regular frog-concert! Our soldiers of the line would never want to turn in to such music as that!

"For five minutes I heard the noise of sabres, rapping upon the doors. Then some soldiers entered the yard, and began to call,—

"'Hoffman, Hoffman!'

"Poor Hoffman lay there under his shavings, quiet enough. It was I who was ready to drop! Every moment I expected to hear them enter that cellar. I had dug out the dead man's sword, and there I waited, never daring to budge, saying all to myself; 'If you get out of this alive, my boy, you owe a splendid candle to St. John the Baptist at Belleville!'

"All the same, after they had called Hoffman often enough, my tenants decided to enter. I heard their heavy boots tramping over the stairs, and in a few minutes the entire barrack of them was snoring soundly, making as much noise as a country clock. That was what I had been waiting for! I started out. The bank was deserted, the lights in the houses were out. So much the better. I went down into the basement again. I dug out my Hoffman from under that bench, stood him up, and hoisted him over my shoulders as a porter might his pack. Oh! but he was heavy, the rascal! And what with fear, and nothing in my crop since

morning I never thought I'd have strength enough for what I had to do. And then, just on the middle of the quay, I thought I felt some one behind me. I turned around. Not a soul! But the moon was rising. I said to myself, 'Look out! the sentry may fire upon you any moment.'

"To make matters worse, the Seine was low. If I threw him in near the bank, he'd stay there, as if he'd been dropped into a basin. I went in myself. On and on! But nowhere water enough. My strength was gone. My limbs were cramped. At last, when I thought I was deep enough in, I let my man drop. But what do you think? He stuck in the mud. Could n't move him. I shoved and shoved. Get up, get up there! But luckily an east wind sprang up. The Seine swelled, and I felt that the dead man slipped lightly from his mooring. A pleasant voyage! I swallowed a mouthful of water and clambered on to the bank again.

"As I crossed the Villeneuve bridge I saw a black object in the middle of the Seine. From a distance it looked like a wherry. It was my Prussian, floating towards Argenteuil, following the current of the river."

COUNTRY-FOLK IN PARIS DURING THE SIEGE.

AT Champrosay, these people were happy indeed. Their farmyard was just under my windows, and for six months of the year my life brought me somewhat in contact with theirs. Before daybreak, the goodman of the house would proceed to the stable, harness his wagon, and set out for Corbeil, where he sold his vegetables; a little later the wife rose, dressed the children, fed the poultry, and milked the cow; all morning long there was such a clatter of sabots over the wooden staircase! In the afternoon all was silent. The father was in the fields, the children were at school, and the mother busied herself silently, spreading out linen in the yard, or sat and sewed before her door, watching her youngest. From time to time some passer-by would stop on the road, and then she would have a chat, plying her needle all the while.

But one day — it was towards the end of the month of August, ever that memorable month! — I heard the goodwife saying to one of her neighbors, —

"What! you don't mean it? The Prussians? but they've merely reached France! — nothing more!"

"They are at Chalons, Mother Jean!" I exclaimed from my window. And that made her smile not a little. In that small, out-of-the-way corner of Seine-et-Oise the country-people could not believe in an invasion at all.

And yet every day wagons were seen passing, loaded with luggage. People had closed their houses, and through that beautiful month, when the days are so long, gardens blossomed in dreary solitude, and no one so much as opened a gate to look at them. By degrees my neighbors themselves grew alarmed. Each fresh departure from the neighborhood made them sad. They felt they were forsaken.

One morning a flourish of drums was heard through the village. An order had come from the *mairie*. They must go to Paris, sell their cow, their fodder, leave nothing behind for the Prussians. And so the goodman set out for Paris, and it was a mournful journey indeed. Along the paved highway, one heavy van of furniture followed another, a long procession, and helter-skelter ran troops of swine and sheep, dazed and confused, getting between the wheels, while oxen, tied together, bellowed after the wagons. On the side of the road, along the ditch, poor wretches were hurrying on foot, behind handcarts full of antiquated furniture, faded easy-chairs, Empire-tables, and mirrors draped in chintz; it was impossible not to feel what distress had entered these homes, at having to remove all these dusty things, all these relics, and to drag load upon load of them along the highways.

At the gates of Paris it was suffocating. There was a wait of two hours. All this time the poor farmer, pushed against his cow, gazed in terror at the embrasures, where cannon were mounted, at ditches filled with water, the fortifications which rose before him, and tall Italian poplars, cut down and withering along the roadside. That evening he returned, utterly dismayed, and told his wife all he had seen. The wife was terrified, and wanted to leave the very next day. But something always occurred to delay their departure from one day to another. There was a new harvesting, or a piece of land that must be ploughed, — and would they not have time to gather the vintage? And deep down in their hearts was a vague hope that perhaps the Prussians would not visit their part of the world.

One night they were awakened by an awful report! The Corbeil bridge had been blown up. Men were running about the country, knocking from door to door, with the cry, —

"The Uhlans! the Uhlans! Flee for your lives!"

They rose as quickly as they could, harnessed the wagon, dressed the children, still half-asleep, and fled along the crossroads with some of their neighbors. Just as they climbed the hill, the clock rang three. They looked back one last time. There was the watering-place, the church-square, there were the roads they knew so well, one descending towards the Seine, the other winding among the vineyards. Already everything began

to look strange to them, and in the gray mist of the early morning the little deserted village itself, each house closed against its neighbor, seemed to shiver as if it too were filled with some terrible foreboding.

And now they are in Paris. Two rooms in the fourth story, in a dismal street. The man himself might be worse off; work has been found for him, and besides, he is in the national guard. He has the life on the ramparts, the daily drill, and diverts himself as best he can, that he may forget his empty granary, and his unsown fields. But the woman, less amenable to the influences of civilization, is wretched, weary of it all, does not know what to do with herself. She has sent the two oldest children to school; but in that dreary day-school, not brightened by a single flower-plot, the little girls cannot breathe freely, and they remember their own pretty convent-school in the country, as busy and full of life and happiness as a beehive. They remember the half-mile walk they took through the woods every morning to reach that school. It pains the mother to see them so unhappy, but she worries most of all about the youngest child.

At home, he went back and forth, following her everywhere, through the yard, through the house, passing across the threshold as many times as herself, dabbling his tiny, reddened hands in the wash-tub, seating himself at the door when she would rest herself for a little while with her knitting. But here, they must climb four stories, over a dark stair-

way where the feet slip; there is only a miserable fire in the narrow chimney-place, and through the high windows is seen only a gray, smoky horizon, and roof-tops of wet slate.

There is, however, a yard where he might play, but this the concierge will not permit. These concierges are another invention of city life. At home, in the village, every man is his own master, and every one has at least a little corner he may call his own. And all day long the door is ajar; at nightfall a big wooden latch is enough for safety, and soon the entire household is wrapped in the darkness of night in the country, a night which knows no fear, and is filled with refreshing slumber. Now and then a dog may bark at the moon, but no one loses his rest on that account. Here in Paris, in these houses of the poor, the concierge is the real proprietor. Her boy dares not go downstairs alone, he is so afraid of this ill-natured woman, who has even compelled them to sell their goat, pretending that it dragged straw and peelings over the stones of the yard.

The poor mother has no stories left with which to divert the child when he is tired. After their meal is over, she wraps him as if they were going for a walk in the fields. Together, hand in hand, they pass through the streets, along the boulevards. Startled, jostled against, bewildered, the child scarcely casts a glance around him. He sees nothing that interests him except horses. They are the only objects that look familiar to him, and he smiles when he sees one. Neither does the

mother take the least pleasure now in anything she sees. She walks on with slow steps, dreaming of her house, her little homestead. And as they pass by,—the mother with her open, honest expression, her neat attire, her smooth and shining hair, the child with his chubby figure, his big galoshes,—one who looks at them closely must feel that they are two aliens, exiles, who long, with all their hearts, for the fresh air and the solitude of their country lanes.

AT THE OUTPOSTS.

MEMORIES OF THE SIEGE.

THE following notes were written from day to day, while passing from one outpost to another. In offering them, I am merely detaching a leaf from my note-book, before the Siege of Paris has become a thing of the past. It is only a sketch, desultory and abrupt, dashed off upon my knee from time to time, and with no more smoothness than the splinter of a shell. But I give these notes just as they are, without altering one word, without even rereading them for myself, lest in so doing I might attempt to lend interest to them by adding fiction to fact, and so mar the whole.

AT LA CORNEUVE, A MORNING IN DECEMBER.

A WHITE, wintry plain, rugged and chalky, across which every sound echoes. Along the frozen mud of the road the infantry of the line are advancing, pell-mell, with the artillery. A slow and dreary march. There will be fighting soon. The men stumble again and again, walk with lowered heads, shivering with the cold, their guns strapped, their

hands concealed within their blankets, as in a muff. From time to time is heard the cry of "Halt!"

The frightened horses neigh. The ammunition wagons rumble, and artillery-men, raising themselves in the saddle, anxiously scan the great white wall of Bourget.

"Can you see them?" ask the soldiers, striking their feet together to warm them. And then "Forward march!" and that human wave, driven back for a moment, moves onward in silence, never quickening its pace.

On the horizon, in front of the fort of Aubervilliers, and sharply outlined against the cold sky in which the sun is rising like a leaden disc, a little group is seen. It is the governor and his staff; against the gray sky they stand in strong relief, like Japanese figures upon a background of mother-of-pearl. In nearer view, stationed along the road like a flock of crows, black-robed figures are seen, ministering brothers of charity, ready for duty at the ambulances. Standing there, their hands crossed beneath their capes as they watch the long line moving on to become food for the cannon, devotion, humility, and sorrow speak from their eyes.

Same day. — Villages deserted, abandoned houses wide open, roofs demolished, windows with their weatherboards gone, staring at you like the eyes of a corpse.

Now and then, in one of these ruins where every sound reverberates, something is heard stirring, the sound of footsteps perhaps, or a door rattling on

its hinges; and after you have passed, a soldier of the line appears on the threshold, hollow-eyed, suspicious, — some marauder perhaps, who is making a search, or some deserter seeking a hiding-place. Upon entering one of these country-houses, towards noon, it appears to be empty and bare. A vulture's claws could not scrape it cleaner! On the lower floor the big kitchen, windowless, doorless, opens upon the back yard, and at the end of the yard is a green hedge; behind the hedge the open country is seen. At one end there is a little spiral stairway of stone. I seat myself upon one of its steps, and remain there for some time. How good a gift this sunshine, this deep calm everywhere! Two or three big flies of last summer, revived by the sunlight, buzz about the rafters of the ceiling. At the fireplace, a few traces of a fire remain, and the hearthstone is reddened with congealed blood. This blood-stained hearth, those cinders still warm, tell the mournful story of the preceding night.

ALONG THE MARNE.

December 3. — Went out through the Porte de Montreuil. A heavy sky, piercing wind, — fog everywhere.

No one to be seen in Montreuil. Doors and windows closed. Behind their enclosure, a flock of geese were cackling. Plainly, the master himself is still here, but in hiding. A little further on,

a cabaret, open. It is warm within, and there is a roaring fire. Three provincials, mobiles, it appears, are seated as close to it as possible, breakfasting. They speak not a word; their eyes are swollen, their faces inflamed; they rest their elbows upon the table, and the poor *moblots* almost fall asleep as they eat.

Left Montreuil, and crossed the Bois de Vincennes, blue with the dense smoke of bivouac fires. Ducrot's army is there. The men are cutting trees to warm themselves. It is a shame to see poplars and birches and young ash-trees flying into the air, root and all, and trailing their delicate golden foliage along the road.

At Nogent, more soldiers, — artillery-men in great cloaks, Norman mobiles, with plump bodies, rounded as apples, little Zouaves, well-muffled, but agile enough, soldiers of the line, bent almost double, their blue handkerchiefs tied about their ears, beneath their képis. Loungers swarm the streets, people jostle each other at the doorways of the two grocery-shops still open. One is reminded of some tiny Algerian village.

At last the open country. A long, deserted road descending towards the Marne. A beautiful sky, pearly in tint, trees whose bare boughs shiver in the mist; below, the great viaduct of the railway, presenting a sinister appearance, like a huge jaw in which a tooth is gone here and there, for the arches of the viaduct have been destroyed in places.

Passing through Le Perreux, ruined gardens

everywhere, houses devastated and dreary; in one of those tiny villas bordering the roadside, I saw behind the gate three great white chrysanthemums, full-blown, which had escaped the general massacre. I pushed open the gate and entered, but they were so beautiful that I could not bear to pluck them.

Took a cross-road, and descended towards the Marne. When I reached the riverside, the sun came out, and shone in full glory upon the river. It was a lovely sight. Just across the river was Petit-Bry, where there had been so much fighting the day before; on the hillside, surrounded by vineyards, its little white houses nestle peacefully, row upon row. Near me, on the river, a boat among the reeds. A group of men are talking upon the bank, while they watch the opposite slope. They are scouts who are going to Petit-Bry to discover whether the Saxons have returned. I cross with them. As we are rowed over the stream, one of the scouts, sitting behind me, says to me in a low voice, —

"If you wish chassepots — the *mairie* is full of them. They have left a colonel of the line there too, a big, fair-haired fellow, with a skin as white as a woman's; and he had on yellow boots that were quite new!"

The boots of the dead soldier had evidently impressed him more than anything else. He was constantly referring to them.

"*Vingt dieux!* but that was a fine pair of boots!" and his eyes sparkled as he spoke.

As we entered Petit-Bry, a sailor shod with

Spanish sandals and carrying four or five chasse-pots, came rolling out of an alley and approached us on the run.

"Keep your eyes open! there are the Prussians!" he said.

We crouched behind a little wall and watched. Above us, and higher than the vineyards themselves, a horseman was seen, quite a melodramatic figure, outlined against the horizon. He was leaning forward in the saddle, his helmet upon his head, his carbine in his hand. Then other horsemen appeared, and foot-soldiers crouched in various places among the vines.

One of them, quite near us, had taken position behind a tree, and never once moved. He was a huge fellow, in a long brown coat, and a colored handkerchief was tied about his head. From the spot where we stood he would have made a splendid target, but what good would that have done? The scouts knew what they were about. And so we hastily entered the boat. The boatman began to swear. We recrossed the Marne without mishap. But scarcely had we landed when we heard muffled voices calling from the opposite bank, —

"Holloa, holloa there! the boat!"

It was my acquaintance who had taken such a fancy to the boots a while before; with three or four of his companions, he had attempted to reach the *mairie*, and was obliged to return precipitately. Unfortunately, there was no one to return for him and his companions. Our boatman had disappeared.

"I do not know how to row," says to me, piteously enough, the sergeant of the scouts, who is crouching at my side in a hole at the water's edge. All this time the others are growing impatient.

"Come, come!" they call; some one must get them. Not an agreeable task. The Marne is rough and swollen. I pull across with all my might, and every moment I feel, back of me, that Saxon above, watching me, motionless, from behind his tree.

In boarding the boat, one of the scouts jumps in so hastily that it is filled with water. It becomes impossible to take on all the men without running the risk of sinking the boat. The bravest one remains to wait upon the bank. He is a corporal of the franc-tireurs, a handsome boy in blue, a little bird worked upon the front of his cap. I would have returned for him gladly, but just then a fusillade from one bank to another began. He waited a few moments without a word; then he took himself off towards Champigny, keeping close to the walls. I do not know what became of him.

Same day. — It is the same with things as with persons; a union of the grotesque with the dramatic adds peculiar intensity to the thrill of horror we experience. To see great suffering stamped upon a face whose outline at other times would cause a smile, does not this move you more profoundly than it would to read the same story elsewhere? Picture to yourself a bourgeois of Daumier's in the last agonies of death, or weeping his heart out beside the dead body of a son

brought home to him slain. Is there not peculiar poignancy in that anguish? Ah, well! to look at all those bourgeois villas along the Marne, toy-gingerbread cottages, gaudy caricatures in rose-pink, apple-green, canary-yellow, and mediæval turrets roofed with zinc, kiosks of imitation brick, rococo gardens, in the centre of each a white metal ball, — when I see them now, blackened with the smoke of battle, their roofs splintered with shells, their weather-vanes broken, their walls dented, blood and straw everywhere, there is something horrible in the sight.

The house which I entered was a fair type of them all. I ascended to the first story and entered the little parlor, done in red and gold. The paper-hangers had not finished their work upon it. Rolls of paper and gilded mouldings were lying about, but there was not a trace of furniture. Bits of broken bottles were scattered over the floor, and in a corner, upon a straw mattress, a man was sleeping in his blouse. Moreover, an indescribable odor of wine, powder, candles, and musty straw; which of these the strongest, it would be hard to say. To warm myself, I toss the leg of a centre-table into the fireplace. Such an idiotic fireplace, stuccoed in pink, and resembling some marvel of the confectioner's art!

While I look at it, for a moment it seems to me that I am merely spending a Sunday afternoon in the country in some prosperous little bourgeois establishment. Is not some one playing backgammon behind me there, in the parlor?

No! those are riflemen, loading and discharging their chassepots. Except for the frequent reports, one might mistake the sound for the tossing of dice.

Upon each report, there is a reply from the opposite bank. The sound borne across the water ricochets back and forth, and echoes ceaselessly among the hills.

Through the loopholes in the parlor, the gleam of the Marne may be seen, its bank bathed in sunlight, and between the poles of the vineyards, like great greyhounds, move the Prussians.

SOUVENIR OF FORT MONTROUGE.

HIGH above, upon the bastion of the fort, in the embrasure formed by sandbags, long marine guns raise themselves proudly, almost erect in their carriages, pointing towards Châtillon. Thus aimed, with their mouths in the air, their handles protruding like ears on each side, they make one think of immense hunting-dogs baying at the moon, bellowing in the face of death. A little lower, upon a terreplein, the sailors are amusing themselves, as if aboard ship, by making an English garden in miniature. There is a bench, an arbor, lawns, and rockeries, and even a banana-tree, not a very tall one, to be sure, scarcely higher than a hyacinth; but all the same it is a welcome sight, and its small green tuft, seen in the midst of sandbags and piles of shells, refreshes the eye.

Oh! that little garden at Fort Montrouge! Would I might see it again, surrounded by a paling, and in that garden a memorial stone, on which were inscribed the names of Carvès, Desprez, Saisset, and all those brave sailors who fell at their post of honor on yonder bastion.

AT LA FOUILLEUSE.

THE morning of the twentieth of January. A pleasant morning, mild and cloudy. Great stretches of plough-land, undulating at a distance, like the sea. On the left, high sand-hills, which serve as a buttress for Mont Valérien. On the right, Gibet Mill, a little stone mill, its sails broken and a battery upon its platform.

Walked for a quarter of an hour beside the long trench leading to the mill. Over it rested a light veil, like a river mist. It was smoke from the bivouac fires. Soldiers were squatting about, making coffee. The smoke of the green wood they were inhaling blinded and choked them. From one end to the other of the trench, a prolonged cough was heard. La Fouilleuse, — a farm, bordered by small timber. Arrived there just in time to see the last of our lines beating a retreat. It was the Third Regiment of Paris mobiles. It marched in good order, none missing, a commander at its head. After the incomprehensible confusion and disorder I had seen since yesterday evening, this sight reassured me a little. After the men, came two horse-

men, — a general and his aide-de-camp. They were quite near me as they passed. The horses were trotting leisurely, the two men were talking to each other, and loudly enough to be heard. The aide-de-camp said, in a fresh young voice, a trifle obsequious, —

"Yes, general! — oh, no! general — certainly, my general."

And the general, in mild, but heart-broken tones, —

"What! he is slain? Oh! the poor boy, the poor boy!"

Then the voices were silent, and nothing was heard but the tramping of horses in the soft earth.

For a moment I remained there alone, looking at that vast, melancholy landscape. One was reminded somewhat of the plains of Chélif or of Mitidja. Lines of ambulance men in gray blouses were climbing a hollowed road. Seeing their white banner, with its red cross, one might have believed he was in Palestine, at the time of the Crusades.

GLIMPSES OF THE INSURRECTION.

IN THE MARAIS.

In the dampness and provincial gloom of these long, tortuous streets, through which are wafted odors of drugs and logwood, in the midst of these ancient hôtels of the time of Henry II., of Louis XIII., which modern industry has caricatured by converting them into establishments for the manufacture of seltzer-water, bronzes, and chemical products, these mouldy gardens filled with packing-cases, these courts of honor, over which heavy trucks are rumbling, these swelling balconies, tall windows, worm-eaten gables, as blackened with smoke as church extinguishers, — in this quarter, the insurrection, especially during those first days, has a unique physiognomy, all its own, an air of primitive simplicity. Rough attempts at barricading every street-corner, but not a soul to guard the barricade. No cannons, no mitrailleuses. Heaps of stones piled up without method or intelligence, simply for the delight of obstructing a passage, leaving big puddles of water for swarms of gamins to paddle in, sailing flotillas of paper boats. Every shop is open, and the shop-keepers are standing at their doors, laughing and discussing politics, from one sidewalk to another. It is not

such people as these who are raising riots, but it is plainly to be seen that they regard the work of the insurgents well-pleased, as though, in disturbing the stones of this peaceful neighborhood, the revolt had aroused the very soul of the ancient bourgeois of Paris in all its riotous levity.

What might have been called, in other days, the spirit of the Fronde, animates the Marais at this hour. Upon the frontons of these proud houses, grotesque faces of sculptured stone, grimace joyously, as if to say, "We have seen all this before!" And my fancy runs away with me and in spite of myself clothes in flowered coats, knee-breeches and big cocked hats this little world of bustling druggists, gilders, and grocers, who with the air of mere spectators watch the tearing up of their streets, their sides shaking with laughter, and are proud to think they have a barricade close to their very shops.

Now and then, at the end of a long, dark alley, I I can see bayonets gleaming upon the Place de Grève. I catch a glimpse of the ancient town-hall, gilded by the sun. In this blaze of light, horsemen are seen galloping by, in long gray cloaks, with floating plumes.

A crowd follows them, shouting and waving their hats. Is it Mademoiselle Montpensier or General Cremer? Epochs begin to grow confused in my brain. In the sunlight, at a distance, a red-shirted Garibaldian orderly rushes by at full speed, and I can almost fancy that I see the red cloak of the

Cardinal de Retz. I can scarcely tell whether that shrewdest of shrewd schemers, of whom all these groups of people are talking, is M. Thiers or Mazarin. I seem to be in a past three hundred years removed from to-day.

AT MONTMARTRE.

As I was climbing the Rue Lepic the other morning, I saw in a cobbler's shop an officer of the national guard, with sabre at his side, and lace up to the elbow. He was tapping a pair of boots, protected by his leather apron that he need not soil his coat. One glance at that shop-window was enough to suggest the whole of insurgent Montmartre.

Imagine an immense village, armed to the teeth, mitrailleuses in front of the watering-trough, the church-square bristling with bayonets, a barricade in front of the schoolhouse, milk-cans and canister side by side; every house is converted into a barrack, at every window soldiers' gaiters are hanging to dry, képis lean forward, waiting to hear the call; in the little shops where old clothes are sold, a vigorous pounding of gun-butts is heard, and from the foot of the hill to the top, a clatter of platters and sabres and canteens. Yet, in spite of all these things, Montmartre does not look as fierce as when it marched upon the Boulevard des Italiens, rifles shouldered, and chin-straps under the chins, marking time ferociously, and seeming to say, "Our

best behavior now! the Reaction is watching us." Here the insurgents are at home, and in spite of cannon and barricades, there is little of a formal or formidable nature in this revolt. It seemed rather a family affair.

A painful sight it was, however, to see the swarms of red trousers, deserters of all sorts — Zouaves, *lignards*, mobiles — obstructing the square in front of the *mairie*, lying about on the benches, sprawling along the sidewalks, drunken, filthy, tattered, and unshaven for a week. As I was passing, one of these luckless rascals, who had climbed up into a tree, began to harangue the crowd. His tongue did not move very freely, and laughter and hootings greeted his efforts. In another part of the Place, a battalion was in motion, on its way up to the ramparts.

"Forward!" cried the officers, waving their swords. The drums beat the charge, and the worthy militiamen, with ardent zeal, rushed to the assault of a long, deserted street, at the end of which could be seen a few terrified, cackling hens, — nothing more!

At the top of the hill a vista of green gardens and yellow roads; rising in their midst La Galette mill, transformed into a military post, with rows of tents, the smoke of tiny bivouac-fires, and, outlined against this background, figures of the national guard are seen. Every object as sharply defined as if sighted from the end of a spyglass, between the sky, black and full of rain, and the shining ochre of the hill.

AT THE FAUBOURG SAINT-ANTOINE.

A NIGHT in January, during the Siege of Paris, I stood upon the Place de Nanterre, in the midst of a battalion of *Franc-tireurs*. The enemy had just attacked our outposts, and men hastily arming to go to the relief of their comrades were forming, groping their way as best they could through the wind and snow; we saw a patrol emerge from a street-corner, preceded by a lantern.

"Halt! who goes there?"

"Mobiles of '48," replied the tremulous voice of an old man. They were tiny fellows in short cloaks, képis askew, and something almost infantile in their appearance. At a little distance they might have been mistaken for children of the regiment, but when the sergeant went closer to see who they were, the light of our lanterns revealed a tiny old man, wrinkled, faded, with blinking eyes and a snow-white chin-beard. This child of the regiment was at least a hundred years old. His companions were scarcely younger. And then that Parisian accent and swashbuckler air of these venerable old gamins!

Arrived the day before at the outposts, the unhappy mobiles had lost their way on their first patrol. They were quickly despatched upon their business.

"Make haste, comrades! the Prussians are attacking us."

"Ah! ah! the Prussians are attacking us!" repeated the poor old creatures, quite dismayed; and turning upon their heels, they were soon lost in the night, their lantern dancing and flickering under the fusillade.

I cannot tell you the fantastic impression these tiny gnomes produced upon me. They looked so aged, so bewildered, so weary! They seemed to have come from some great distance, — and I could almost imagine this was a phantom-patrol, wandering through the land since 1848, a patrol that had lost its way twenty-three years ago, and in search of it ever since.

The insurgents of the Faubourg Saint-Antoine recalled this apparition to me. I found these ancients of '48 forever going astray — a little older now than they were then, but as incorrigible as ever, hoary-haired rioters playing at their old game of civil war with a classic barricade two or three stories high, a red flag floating from its summit, melodramatic attitudes at the cannon's breech, sleeves rolled up, gruff voices exclaiming, —

"Keep on the move, citizens!" and then their bayonets were pointed.

All is bustle and commotion upon this great Babel-like faubourg. From the Place du Trône to the Bastille, surprises, scuffles, searches, and arrests, open-air meetings, pilgrimages to the Column; [1] tipsy patrollers have forgotten the password; chassepots go off of themselves; ribalds are led to the *comité* of the Rue Basfroid; the

[1] La Colonne de Juillet, on the Place de la Bastille. — Tr.

drum beats to arms; the general and the tocsin are heard. Oh! that tocsin. With what delight these madmen set their bells a-ringing. As soon as twilight sets in, in every belfry a mad dance begins, incessant as the tinkling of a jester's bells! Hark! the drunken tocsin, fantastic, uncertain, panting in broken tones, stammering and hiccoughing. And the earnest tocsin! ringing out fiercely with all its might, peal upon peal, till the bell-rope breaks! And then the muffled tocsin, lifeless and dead, its sleepy notes falling as heavily upon the ear as the curfew's toll.

In the midst of all this tumult of distracted bells and brains, I am impressed by the tranquillity of the Rue Lappe and the alleys and passages which radiate from it. The neighborhood is a species of Auvergnese ghetto where the children of Cantal traffic peacefully their old iron, as little concerned with thoughts of an insurrection as though it were located a thousand leagues away. As I pass, I note that all these brave Rémonencques are very busy in their dark shops. The women squat upon the stone step in front of their doorways, and knit and jabber in broken French, while their little ones tumble about in the passage, their frizzly locks full of iron-dust.

THE FERRY.

BEFORE the war, a fine suspension-bridge crossed the river at this point, with two lofty piers of white stone, and its tarred cordage, spanning the horizon from one river-bank to the other, presented that aërial appearance which adds such beauty to vessels or balloons. Beneath the great middle arches of the bridge, a line of boats passed twice a day, in clouds of smoke, without having to lower a smoke-stack. On either bank, washerwomen's boats and beaters were seen, and small fishing-boats anchored to rings.

A road shaded with poplars led to the bridge, stretching from meadow to meadow, like a great green curtain, fluttering with every breeze that blew from the river. It was a charming sight.

But this year all is changed. The poplars are still standing, but they no longer lead to the bridge, for the bridge is gone. The two piers have been blown up, scattering fragments of stone in all directions. The stones are lying there still. The little white toll-house, half destroyed by the explosion, wears the appearance of a new ruin, a barricade, or some pile of rubbish. Cordage and iron wires are drenched with water. The platform of the bridge, sunk in the sand, water all about it,

looks like a huge wreck, surmounted by a red flag to warn mariners; all that the Seine has to offer, cut grass and mouldy planks, is caught here, as if by a dam, eddying and whirling. There is a rent in the landscape, an open wound that tells of disaster. And to make the sight still sadder, the poplars along the walk leading to the bridge have been shorn of their leafage. All those beautiful tufted poplars are literally devoured by larvæ, for trees themselves are subject to invasion. There is not a single shoot to be seen on the branches, the trees are cut, their foliage thinned. And through the great avenue, useless and deserted now, big white butterflies float lazily.

While waiting for the bridge to be rebuilt, a ferry has been established near-by. It is an immense raft, and upon it are ferried across horses and carriages, plough-horses and ploughs, and cows rolling their placid eyes at sight of the moving waters. Beasts and equipages are placed in the middle of the raft; on the sides, passengers of various sorts, country people, children going to school in the village, Parisians off for a holiday. Ribbons and veils flutter beside horses' tethers. The little company upon the raft might have been dropped from some wreck. The boat advances slowly.

The passage across the Seine seems longer than ever now, the river wider than before, and with the ruins of that broken bridge in the foreground, the horizon bounding those banks, each almost a stranger to the other, expands with a sad solemnity.

That morning I reached the ferry very early. As yet there was no one on the bank. The ferryman's little house, an old van, standing in the moist sand, was closed. It was dripping from the fog. Children were coughing inside.

"Hallo! — Eugène!"

"Coming, coming!" called the ferryman; and he came, dragging himself along. He was an excellent ferryman, still young, but he had served in the artillery during the last war, and he came out of it crippled with rheumatism, the splinter of a shell in his leg, his face all scarred. The brave fellow smiled when he saw me.

"We shall have plenty of room this morning, sir!"

And indeed I was the only one on the ferry, but before he had unfastened his rope more passengers arrived. First came a stout, bright-eyed farmer's wife, going to market at Corbeil, with a big basket upon each arm, which straightened her rustic figure, and helped her to walk firmly and erectly. Behind her, in the hollow road, came others whose figures were seen indistinctly through the mist, though their voices could be heard. One of these voices was a woman's, gentle and tearful.

"Oh, Monsieur Chachignot, I beseech you, do not press us so hard. You know he has work now. Only give him time enough to pay you. That is all he asks."

"I have given him time enough; I have given him altogether too long," answered the voice of an old peasant. The words were mumbled through

his toothless jaws; the tone of the voice was cruel. "The sheriff must tend to this matter now. He may do as he chooses. Hallo! — Eugène!"

"'T is that scoundrel, Chachignot," the ferryman whispered to me. "Here! here!"

At that moment I saw arrive upon the bank a tall old man, tricked out in a frock-coat of coarse cloth, and a silk hat very tall and very new. This sunburned and wrinkled peasant, with his knotted finger-joints, deformed by hard work, looked more sunburned and sinister than ever, in the clothes of a gentleman. Obstinacy stamped his features, and a big hooked nose like an Apache Indian's, pinched lips, and wrinkles that maliciousness had written upon his face, lent to his countenance a ferocity quite in keeping with the name of Chachignot.

"Come, Eugène, make haste," he said, stepping on to the ferry, his voice trembling with anger. The farmer's wife approached him, as the ferryman was saying, "What's the matter, Father Chachignot?"

"Oh! is it you, Blanche? Don't speak to me about it. I am furious. Those beggarly Maziliers!" And he pointed out with his fist a tiny, stunted, dark figure, going back along the hollow road, weeping.

"What have these people done to vex you?"

"What have they done? They owe me four quarters' rent, and all my vintage besides, and I can't get a single sou from them. And now I 'll put it in the sheriff's hands, and he will throw the blackguards into the street."

"But this Mazilier is a worthy fellow. Perhaps it

"'Don't speak to me about it. I am furious'"

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is not his fault that he cannot pay you. So many people have lost so much through this war."

The old peasant exploded.

"He's a fool! He might have made his fortune with the Prussians, but he would n't do it, not he! From the day the Prussians arrived, he closed his tavern, took down his sign. At other cafés they've done a fine business during the war, but he refused to sell a single sou's worth. Worse even than that. He managed to get himself put in prison through his insolence. He's a fool, I tell you. Why did he meddle with affairs that were no concern of his? Was he one of the military? All he had to do was to furnish wine and brandy to his customers. Then he would have been able to pay me, the rascal! Well! I'll teach him how to play patriot!"

And red with indignation, he moved about in his frock-coat, in the clownish fashion of a countryman used only to the blouse.

As he continued, the clear eyes of the farmer's wife, filled a few moments before with compassion for these Maziliers, grew hard and almost scornful. She was a peasant herself, and such entertain no very high opinion of those who refuse to make money when opportunity offers. At first she had said, "It's very hard for the wife," but a moment later she observed, "Yes, that's true, one should not turn his back upon his luck." Her conclusion was, "You are right, old man; when one owes he must pay." Chachignot repeated again and again through his clenched teeth, —

"He's a fool! He's a fool!"

The ferryman, who was listening to them both, although busied in steering the raft along with his pole, felt that he ought to speak now.

"Don't be so cruel, Father Chachignot; what good will it do you to go to the sheriff? What would you gain by making these poor wretches sell their all? Wait a little. You can afford to do that."

The old man turned upon him as if bitten.

"Yes, I'd advise you to talk, you, a —— good-for-nothing! You are another of those —— patriots! Is n't it a shame? Five children and not a sou for them, but he must amuse himself firing off cannons, which no one compelled him to do; and I put it to you, monsieur" (I believe the miserable wretch addressed myself!)," what good has all that sort of thing done us? Himself for example, what did he gain by it? He got his face battered and lost a good position he had. And now look at him, living like a gypsy in a hole open to every wind that blows, his children sickening from it, his wife breaking her back over the wash-tub. Is n't he a fool too?"

Anger flashed in the ferryman's eyes. I saw the scar upon his wan face deepen, and grow whiter, but he was able to restrain himself, and vented his rage upon the pole, which he shoved into the sand so roughly that he almost twisted it. A word more might have cost him even the place he had, for M. Chachignot is an authority in that part of the country. He is one of the municipal council.

THE COLOR SERGEANT.

I.

THE regiment was fighting upon an embankment of the railroad, and served as a target for the whole Prussian army, massed opposite them, under shelter of the woods. Officers cried, "Lie down!" but no one was willing to obey, and the valiant regiment remained standing at its post, grouped about the ensign. Under that expanse of sky reddened by the setting sun, with pasture-lands and fields of ripening wheat in their rear, this body of soldiers, harassed by the enemy, enveloped in dense clouds of smoke, reminded one of a herd of cattle surprised upon the open plain by the first whirlwind announcing the approach of a terrible storm.

A fire of shot and shell rained upon the talus formed by the embankment. Nothing could be heard but the crackling of the fusillade, the sound of canteens falling heavily into the ditch, and the lingering echo of bullets, which vibrated from one end of the battlefield to the other, like the tense strings of some sinister, resounding instrument.

From time to time the flag, borne aloft above all, stirred by the breath of the fusillade, fell amid

clouds of smoke. And then, drowning the sound of the firings, of the death-rattle and the curses of the wounded, rose a stern and dauntless voice, "To the flag, boys! to the flag!" And through the red mist could be seen, dimly, the shadowy form of an officer rushing forward, and the heroic ensign, restored to life again, soared once more above the field of battle.

Twenty-two times it fell; twenty-two times its staff, still warm from the clasp of the dying hand which relinquished it, was seized again, and borne aloft, and when the sun had set, and all that remained of the regiment, a mere handful of men, slowly beat the retreat, all that was left of the flag was a mere shred in the hands of Sergeant Hornus, the twenty-third standard-bearer of that day.

II.

THIS Sergeant Hornus was an old fellow who had served three terms, scarcely knew enough to sign his own name, and had taken twenty years to win his sergeant's stripes. All the wretchedness of a foundling's life, all the brutalizing influences of the barracks showed themselves in his low, overhanging forehead, and back bent beneath the constant burden of his knapsack, — showed themselves too in that stolid bearing characteristic of a soldier in the ranks. And besides, he had a slight impediment in his speech; but to be color-sergeant does not require much eloquence. The very evening of

the battle his colonel said to him, "You have the flag, my brave fellow; keep it."

And then, upon his poor field-cloak that had weathered so many battles and storms, upon that cloak all faded and worn, the cantinière sewed the golden stripe of a sub-lieutenant.

Henceforth that humble life had but one proud aim. Suddenly the old soldier's form grew erect. That poor creature, who had marched all his life with bent shoulders and downcast eyes, from that day bore himself boldly, his glance constantly upraised towards that bit of tattered cloth, that he might see it fluttering above him, and carry it erect and high — so high that not death, nor treason, nor defeat could touch it.

You never saw a happier man than Hornus upon the day when a battle occurred, his staff clasped tightly in both hands, and firmly held in its leather sheath. He never spoke, he scarcely moved. He was as solemn as a priest. It seemed as though he carried some consecrated thing. All his energy, all his strength was in the fingers that curled about that beautiful gilded tatter of a flag against which the bullets rushed; his whole soul flashed in the eyes which hurled defiance at the Prussians, facing them squarely, with a look that seemed to say, "Come on! Try to take it from me!" But no one made the attempt, not even death itself. After Borny, after Gravelotte, the most murderous battles of the campaign, the flag emerged, gashed, rent, pierced with wounds, but no one bore it for a moment except old Hornus.

III.

THEN September came, with the army before Metz, — the blockade, and that long halt in the mire, when the cannon rusted, while the first soldiers in the world, demoralized by inaction, without food, without news, died of fever and ennui at the foot of their guns. Both commanders and soldiers had lost all confidence; not so old Hornus. He alone still had faith. That tattered tricolor was all in all to him, and as long as he perceived that it was still there, he could not realize that anything had been lost. Unfortunately, as there was no longer any fighting, the colonel kept the colors in his own quarters, outside Metz, and the brave Hornus was almost like a mother that has put her child out to nurse. He thought of his flag ceaselessly. And when he grew weary and could endure it no longer, he set out for Metz as fast as he could, and merely because of the fact that he had seen it, and always in the same place, resting quietly against the wall, he returned thence full of courage and patience, and under his wet tent dreamed dreams of battle and of marching on to victory, with the tricolors unfurled to the breeze, and floating yonder above the Prussian trenches.

But one day, at an order of Marshal Bazaine's, all these illusions crumbled. That morning, when Hornus awoke, he found the entire camp in an uproar, the soldiers standing in groups, greatly ex-

cited and incensed, uttering cries of rage, and all raising their clenched fists towards the same quarter of the town, as though their anger were aimed at one culprit alone. Cries of "Away with him! Shoot him!" were heard. They said what they would. The officers did not attempt to hinder, but walked apart from them, and with bent heads, as if ashamed to look their men in the face. And indeed there was cause for shame, for to one hundred and fifty thousand men, well-armed and still able for service, had just been read the marshal's order, which handed them over to the enemy, without even a combat.

"And the colors?" demanded Hornus, growing pale.

The colors were to be delivered with the rest, the guns, what remained of the equipages, — in short, everything.

"*To . . . To . . . Tonnerre de Dieu!*" stammered the poor man. "But they shall never have mine!" and he started on a run towards the city.

IV.

THERE, too, all was excitement and stir. National guards, citizens, the militia were shouting and gesticulating. Deputations passed by on their way to the marshal murmuring as they went. But Hornus saw and heard nothing of all this. He was busy talking to himself, as he climbed the Rue du Faubourg.

"Take my colors from me! Ah! we shall see. Impossible! Who has the right to do that? Let him give to the Prussians what is his to give, his gilded coaches, his silver plate brought from Mexico; but this thing is my own, — it is my honor. I forbid any one to lay hands upon it."

He ran so fast, and his tongue stuttered so, that those bits of phrases were chopped in pieces. But all the same, lodged somewhere in his brain, he had an idea of his own, this old man! And it was clear enough, and it could not be driven out! He had resolved to seize the colors, run into the midst of the regiment with them, and rush upon the Prussians, with all who were ready to follow him.

When he reached the colonel's quarters, he was not allowed to enter. The colonel, furious himself at what had happened, would see no one. But Hornus could not take this hint.

He swore, shouted, bullied the orderly, insisting, "My colors! I will have them!"

Finally a window was opened.

"Is that you, Hornus?"

"Yes, my colonel, I."

"All the flags are at the Arsenal. You have only to go there, and you will get a receipt."

"A receipt? What is that for?"

"It is the marshal's order."

"But, colonel —"

"Oh, get out! and give us peace."

Old Hornus staggered like a drunken man.

"A receipt, a receipt," he repeated mechanically. At last he set out again, understanding one thing only, his colors were now at the Arsenal, and he must recover them at any cost.

V.

THE doors of the Arsenal stood wide open, that the Prussians' wagons might pass. There they waited, drawn up in line, in the courtyard. Hornus shuddered, as he entered. All the other color-bearers were there too, fifty or sixty officers, dejected and silent. And those sombre carts waiting in the rain, the men grouped, bare-headed, behind them; there was something funereal about it all!

In one corner were heaped all the flags of Bazaine's army, lying in utter confusion upon the muddy pavement. Nothing was more saddening than to see those gaudy shreds, those fragments of gold fringe, carved staffs, all those glorious trappings thrown upon the ground and soiled with mud and rain. An officer in charge lifted them one by one, and as his regiment was called each color-bearer advanced for his receipt. Two Prussian officers watched the loading of the flags, rigid and unmoved.

And thus ye departed, O sacred shreds of Glory, baring your wounds, trailing your folds along the pavement, like a bird with broken wings. So ye departed, bearing with you that shame which is the portion of all beautiful things, once they have been sullied; and a bit of France herself went with the

going of each flag; the sun of many a long day's march still lingered in your faded folds, where the mark of many a bullet guarded the memory of the nameless dead, slain by the shots chance hurled against the banner they defended.

"Hornus, it's your turn. They are calling you. Go and get your receipt."

As if he cared about that!

His flag was before him — his very own — the most beautiful, the most mutilated of all, and as he saw it again it seemed to him that he stood once more upon the talus. He heard the bullets whistle, the dented canteens, the voice of his colonel, "To the flag, boys! to the flag!" There he saw his twenty-two comrades stretched upon the field, and he the twenty-third, rushing on to raise the colors, to support the flag which tottered, for the arm that had held it had relaxed its hold. Ah, on that day he had sworn to defend, to protect that flag, even unto death! and now —

Thinking of that, all his heart's blood seemed to surge to his brain. Intoxicated, dazed, he rushed upon the Prussian officer, seized that beloved ensign, and grasped it in both hands. He attempted to raise it as of old, erect and high, crying, "To the flag!" but his voice was lost in his throat. He felt the staff tremble, slip from his hands. In that enervating, deathlike atmosphere which weighs so heavily upon a conquered city, the flag itself was powerless to float; no valiant heart could breathe such an atmosphere and live. Old Hornus fell to earth, as though a stroke of lightning had crushed him.

THE DEATH OF CHAUVIN.

ONE Sunday in August, travelling in a railway coach just at the beginning of what was then termed the Hispano-Prussian Incident, I met him for the first time. Although I had never seen him before, I had no difficulty in recognizing him at once. Tall, lean, grizzled, a fiery face, nose like a buzzard's beak, and rolling eyes with an angry flame in them, and never relenting to amiability save for the illustrious gentleman who sat in the corner, decorated with the Cross of the Legion. As I noted the low, narrow forehead, stamped with obstinacy,— one of those foreheads which the same thought, working ceaselessly and ever in the same place, has at last dented with a single deep wrinkle,— something of over-credulity in his bearing, something of the political precisian in his manner, especially the terrific fashion in which he rolled the letter "r" when speaking of "Fr-r-rance," and of the "Fr-r-rench flag," caused me to exclaim to myself, "Here is Chauvin!"

And Chauvin indeed it was, Chauvin at his best, declaiming, gesticulating, belaboring the Prussians from the pages of his newspaper, Chauvin entering Berlin, his cane upraised, an intoxicated, deaf, blind, furious lunatic. Conciliation or delay impossible! — War! war! at any cost!

"But what if we are not prepared for that, Chauvin?"

"Monsieur, Frenchmen are always prepared for anything!" responded Chauvin, drawing himself up to his full height; from beneath his bristling moustache, an explosion of *r*'s rushed with such energy that the windows fairly trembled.

Irritating, foolish personage! How quickly I understood all the jeers, all the jesting songs that tradition had woven about his name, making a celebrity of this absurd creature!

After that first meeting I swore I would flee him, but through some singular fatality he seemed ever to be dogging my footsteps. On the very day in the Senate when M. de Grammont had solemnly announced to our conscript-fathers, "War is declared!" in the midst of forced acclamations, a formidable cry of "Vive la France!" rose from the galleries. And looking upward near the friezes, I saw Chauvin brandishing his lank arms. Some days later I ran across him again in the Opera, standing in Girardin's box, demanding to hear "le Rhin Allemand,"[1] and observing to the singers who had not as yet learned that classic, "To learn it will take longer than to take it!"[2]

Soon it appeared that this ubiquitous Chauvin had taken complete possession of Paris. Everywhere, at street-corners, on the boulevards, always perched upon some bench or table, this absurd

[1] Poem written in reply to *Die Wacht am Rhein.* — TR.

[2] Chauvin puns: "*Il faudra donc plus de temps pour l'apprendre que pour le prendre!*"— TR.

Chauvin appeared before me; wherever drums were beating, flags floating, the strains of some Marseillaise sounding, there was Chauvin, distributing cigars to the soldiers about to leave, hailing the ambulances, that hot head of his rising above the crowd, inciting them whilst he roared, clamored, and invaded every spot, until it almost seemed that there were six hundred thousand Chauvins in Paris. Truly, one could not have escaped this intolerable figure, unless he had shut himself up at home, and locked doors and windows.

And how was it possible to remain in one place after Wissembourg, Forbach, and all that series of disasters which made that mournful month of August seem like one long nightmare, with scarcely a waking moment, the nightmare of a feverish, oppressive summer? How could one refrain from mingling with that restless, moving multitude, running in search of news, of fresh bulletins, promenading all night long beneath the gas-jets, their faces full of terror and consternation. And no night of all that I did not encounter Chauvin. He passed along the boulevards, advancing from group to group, delivering a peroration in the midst of a silent crowd, — overflowing with hope, with good news, sure of success despite everything, repeating to you twenty times in succession that Bismarck's white cuirassiers had been crushed to the last man!

Singular fact. Already Chauvin had ceased to impress me as before. He no longer seemed to me as ridiculous as of old. I did not believe a single word he was saying, but what of that? It delighted

me merely to listen to him. In spite of his blindness, his insane pride, his ignorance, there was in this diabolical creature a passionate, persistent energy which acted like a vital flame warming the heart.

And we had need of such a flame, during the long months of the siege, during that terrible winter when we lived upon horse-flesh and bread fit only for the dogs. The very aspect of Parisians seemed to say, "Were it not for Chauvin, Paris would not have held out for a week!" From the beginning Trochu had said, "They can enter when they will!"

"They will never enter!" said Chauvin. Chauvin had faith, Trochu had none. What was that to Chauvin? He still believed in notaries' plans, in Bazaine, in sorties; every night he listened to Chanzy's cannons booming at Étampe, the sharpshooters of Faidherbe behind Enghien, and, what was most wonderful of all, even the rest of us heard them, so deeply had the spirit of this heroic imbecile entered our souls.

Brave Chauvin! Who but he was ever the first to sight in a sky livid, overhanging, and full of snow, the tiny white wing of some carrier pigeon! When Gambetta sent us one of his eloquent Tarasconnades, it was Chauvin's powerful voice that declaimed it at the door of every *mairie*. During the keen December nights, when the long lines of people stood shivering before the butchers' shops, chilled and weary with waiting, Chauvin bravely led the line, and thanks to him, that famished crowd

found they still had strength enough to laugh and sing, and dance in the snow.

"*Le, lon, la, laissez-les passer, les Prussiens dans la Lorraine,*" chanted Chauvin, and galoshes clattered, beating time, and for a moment the warm red of health returned to poor wan faces framed in woollen hoods. Alas! of what avail was it all? One evening, crossing Rue Drouot, I saw an anxious crowd pressing silently towards the *mairie*, and in that mighty Paris, where now not a light or a carriage was to be seen, I heard the grandiloquent voice of Chauvin, solemnly proclaiming, "We hold the heights of Montretout!" A week later, all was over.

From that day Chauvin appeared to me only at rare intervals. Two or three times I saw him on the boulevard, gesticulating, talking of *r-r-revenge*, — for that letter "r" still rolled upon his tongue. But no one listened to him any longer. Fashionable Paris languished, pined for its former pleasures; laboring Paris was in no pleasant mood. Vainly did poor Chauvin brandish his long arms; the former groups, instead of surrounding him, scattered at his approach.

"A regular bore!" said some. "Spy!" cried others. Then came the days of insurrection, of the red flag, and the Commune, — Paris in the power of riotous mobs. Chauvin, himself a suspect, no longer dared to stir abroad. Then came the famous day when the Vendôme Column was pulled down. Of course he had to be there, in a corner of the Place. The crowd guessed it was he. The

street-Arabs insulted him, though they did not see him.

"Hallo! there's Chauvin!" they exclaimed, and when the Column fell, the Prussian officers, drinking champagne before a window at head-quarters, raised their glasses, roaring "Ha, ha, ha! Mossié Chaufin."

Till the twenty-third of May, Chauvin gave no further sign of life. Crouching at the bottom of a cellar, the unfortunate was reduced to despair when he heard French shells go whizzing over the roofs of Paris. At last one day, between two cannonades, he ventured to set foot outside.

The street was deserted, and seemed wider than when he had seen it last. On one side rose the barricade, full of menace, with its cannons and red flag, on the other two short chasseurs of Vincennes advanced, keeping close to the wall, and stooping, their guns pointed. The troops of Versailles had just entered Paris.

Chauvin's heart bounded. "Vive la France!" he cried, darting towards the soldiers. His voice was lost in the midst of a fusillade from opposite sides. Through some sinister misunderstanding, this unfortunate was a target for both sides, the victim of a twofold hate which slew him. Upon that road whose stones had been uptorn, his body fell. It lay there for two days, with arms out-stretched, and with rigid face.

Thus perished Chauvin, martyr of our civil wars. He was the last Frenchman!

ALSACE! ALSACE!

I HAVE most delightful memories of a journey I made some years ago through Alsace. Not that insipid railroad-journey which leaves naught behind but the recollection of a country cut by rails and telegraph wires. My journey was afoot, knapsack upon my shoulders, with a good, stout stick for my comrade, and a companion who was not too talkative. The best way to travel; and what vivid memories one retains of all he has seen in that fashion!

Especially of late, now that Alsace is closed against us, all my former impressions of that lost land return to me. What delicious surprises awaited one upon those long rambles through that beautiful country, where the woods raised their dark background like great, green curtains, in the rear of peaceful villages flooded with sunshine! Where, at some winding of the mountains, one would sight belfry-towers and factories, well supplied with streams, saw-mills, wind-mills, and here and there some striking figure in unfamiliar costume, darting up from the fresh verdure of the plain.

Every morning we were up with the sun.

"Mossié, Mossié! it is four o'clock!" the inn-servant would call to us. We jumped out of bed

quickly, and our knapsacks buckled, groped our way down the frail little stairway, over which every step echoed. Downstairs, before setting out we drank a glass of *kirsch* in one of those big inn-kitchens, where an early fire was kindling with a crackling of twigs that brought to mind the remembrance of the fog clinging to damp windows. We set out.

It requires an effort at first. At that early hour all the weariness of the preceding night returns. Our eyes, and the air as well, are full of slumber. By degrees the damps of the early dew are scattered, the morning mist evaporates in the sun. Once started, we trudge on. When the heat becomes too oppressive, we halt, and breakfast by a spring, or a brook, and then fall asleep in the grass, lulled by the murmuring of the water. We are awakened by the noise of a big bee which just grazes us, whizzing by like a bullet. Cooler than before, we set out again. After the sun has begun to descend, the road does not seem as long as before. We seek a resting-place, an asylum for the night, and thoroughly weary, fall asleep, sometimes in the bed of an inn, sometimes in a barn left open, at the foot of a haystack, in the open air, disturbed by no other sounds than the murmur of birds, the chirping of insects among the leaves, light, springing steps and silent flocks, all that nocturnal music which, when one is very weary, falls upon his ear as if part of a dream.

What were the names of those charming Alsatian villages which we met at regular intervals at the

road's end? I cannot now recall the name of one of them, and in fact they all resembled each other so closely, especially as we travelled through Haut-Rhin, that after we had passed through a number of them at different times, it did not seem to me that we had seen more than one. There was the main road, and the houses looking upon it all had windows with tiny panes, encased in leaden frames, garlanded with hop and rose vines; over the latticed gates leaned old men, smoking their big pipes, or women stooped, calling their children, playing upon the road. In the morning when we passed by, all was wrapped in slumber; we could scarcely hear the rustling of straw in the stables, or the panting breath of the dogs under the gates.

The village we reached two leagues further on is just awaking. The sound of the opening of shutters is heard, the splashing of bucketfuls of water; gutters overflow; the cows troop lazily to the watering-troughs, brushing away the flies with their long tails. Farther on, the next village looks just like the preceding one, but about it broods the deep silence of a summer afternoon, interrupted only by the drowsy sing-song of the village school, and the monotonous hum of bees scaling the clambering vines which reached to the very top of each châlet. And always one is sure of lighting upon some little corner which reminds him that the village is merely a part of the province, — sometimes a white, two-story house with a new, shining insurance-sign upon it, or one sights a notary's scutcheon, or a doctor's bell. The passer-by

hears the notes of a piano, and strains of a waltz, somewhat antiquated it is true, float to him through the green blinds, as he stands upon the sunny road. Later, twilight descends; the cattle come home, spinners are returning, all is bustle and commotion! The doorways are full of people, troops of little flaxen-heads in the streets. The windows are aflame with the last ray of the dying sun, coming one knows not whence.

I still recall with delight a Sabbath morning in an Alsatian village, — service-time, the streets deserted, the houses emptied, but here and there an old man sunning himself before some doorway; the church full of people, and, streaming through its panes, the delicate rose-tints of tapers burning by day, — the plain-chant coming in fitful bursts along the passage, a choir-boy in scarlet cassock hurriedly crossing the Place, bare-headed, censer in hand, to get a light at the baker's shop.

Sometimes for whole days we would not enter a single village. We sought the shade of many a coppice, of untrodden byways and delicate thickets fringing the Rhine, spots where its beautiful green waters were lost in marsh land swarming with insects. Through the slender tracery of many a branch we could see the great river for miles and miles, laden with rafts, floats loaded with grass cut on the islands, and seeming themselves like tiny floating islands borne on by the current; farther on, the canal leading from the Rhône to the Rhine — with its long border of poplars, their green tops almost touching each other, reflected

in those familiar waters, narrowed, hemmed in by artificial banks. Here and there the small lodge of the lock-keeper was seen, and children running barefoot over the bars of the lock, and amidst splashing of foam huge floats loaded with wood advanced slowly across the entire breadth of the canal.

After we had had enough of zigzag and rambling paths, we would retrace our steps along the white main road which leads straight towards Basle, a cool, refreshing road, shaded by walnut trees — the chain of the Vosges on the right, the Black Forest on the opposite side.

And when the July sun grew too oppressive, oh! what delightful halts I have made at the edge of that road leading to Basle, stretched at full length in the dry grass of some ditch, listening to the music of partridges calling from field to field, and overhead the main road with its dismal sounds — a carter's oath, a passing bell, the creaking of an axle, the sound of a pickaxe breaking stones, the hurried gallop of a gendarme, — at which a flock of geese scatter in terror, — peddlers bent beneath their packs, the letter-carrier, his blue blouse trimmed with red braid, suddenly leaving the highway, to disappear from sight upon a little cross-road bordered with wild hedges, at the end of which one feels sure of coming upon a hamlet, a farmhouse, an isolated life.

And then those delightful surprises of a journey afoot, — those short cuts that lengthen indefinitely, the deceptive tracks of carriage-wheels, the

trail of horses' hoofs which lead straight to some field, the deaf gates which will not open at your call, the inns full of people when you arrive — and the sudden shower, that delicious summer-shower which the warm air evaporates so quickly, though the steaming plains, the fleece of flocks, and even the herdsman's coat attest its presence.

I remember how a terrific storm surprised us in this fashion as we were crossing the woods, descending the Ballon d'Alsace. As we quitted the inn at its summit, the clouds were literally beneath us. A few pines raised their tops above them, but as we descended we actually entered a land of wind and rain and hail. Soon we were imprisoned, enmeshed in a perfect network of lightnings. Almost at our feet a fir fell with a crash, struck by lightning; and whilst we went tumbling down a short *schlitage*, we saw through a film of gushing water a group of tiny maidens who had sought shelter amongst the rocks. Terrified, pressing closely against each other, their hands had all they could do to hold their calico aprons and their small wicker-baskets filled with black bilberries freshly picked. On each tiny berry glistened a point of light, and the little black eyes which darted at us from that hiding-place in the rocks resembled those shining berries. The great fir lying prone upon the descent, the reverberation of the thunder, the sight of these tiny rovers of the forest so charming in their tatters, — it all reminded one of some tale of Canon Schmidt's.

And what a delightful flame welcomed us when

we reached Rouge-Goutte! What a splendid fire to dry our clothing, while we heard an omelette crackling, — that inimitable omelette of Alsace, crisp and golden as a cake.

The morning after the storm I saw a sight which impressed me.

On the road to Dannemarie at a turn of the hedge was a magnificent field of wheat, cut down, despoiled, soaked with the rain, its broken stalks spreading upon the ground in all directions. The heavy and ripened ears had dropped their treasure in the mud, and hosts of tiny birds were feeding upon that lost harvesting, hopping about the hollows filled with wet straw, scattering the wheat far and wide. A sinister sight, this pillaging beneath that clear sky and in the bright sunshine. Regarding his ruined field, stood a great, tall peasant, bent in figure, clothed in the costume of ancient Alsace. Genuine sorrow could be read upon his features, yet at the same time a certain calm and resignation and I know not what vague hope — as if he would tell himself that though his harvest was despoiled, the earth beneath belonged to him always, — fertile, quickening, faithful, and that while the soil remained his own he need not despair.

THE CARAVANSARY.

I CANNOT recall without a smile the sense of disenchantment I experienced on catching my first glimpse of an Algerian caravansary. That delightful word, which casts a spell over all the Oriental and enchanted Land of the Thousand and One Nights, had conjured in my imagination long vistas of arched galleries, Moorish courts planted with palm trees, cool and refreshing streamlets dripping, with melancholy music, upon mosaic pavements, and everywhere, stretched upon mats, travellers in Turkish slippers, smoking their pipes in the shade of some terrace, while from caravans halting under the noonday sun, arose the heavy odor of musk, of scorched leather, attar of roses, and golden tobacco.

Words are always more poetic than the objects they describe. Instead of the caravansary I imagined, I found an ancient inn, of the Île-de-France type, located on the highway, a stopping-place for carriers and post-chaises, with its branch of holly, its stone bench at the doorway, and surrounded with courtyards, sheds, barns, and stables.

Far enough removed it was from my dream of the Thousand and One Nights, but after the first sense of disillusion had passed away, I was quick

to perceive the picturesque charm of this out-of-the-way Frankish inn, a hundred leagues from Algiers, and standing in the midst of an immense plain, against which rose in relief innumerable tiny hills, crowding closely together, and blue as the waves of the sea. On one hand, a pastoral of the Orient fields of maize, a stream bordered with oleander, and rising here and there the white cupola of some ancient tomb; on the other side, the main road, lending the bustle and animation of European life to this Old Testament scene. It was this blending of the Orient with the Occident, this flavor of modern Algeria, which gave to the caravansary of Madame Schontz such an amusing and original physiognomy.

I can still see the Tlemcen diligence entering the grand courtyard, in the midst of camels squatted about, heavy laden with burnouses and ostrich eggs. In the sheds negroes are making their couscous, planters are unpacking a model plough, and Maltese are playing cards upon a wheat-measure. Travellers alight, and fresh relays of horses are brought. The courtyard is completely blocked. A red-coated spahi is performing a *fantasia* for the benefit of the maids of the inn. Two gendarmes have halted in front of the kitchen, and are draining a bumper without dismounting. In a corner some Algerian Jews in blue hose, and caps on their heads, are sleeping upon woollen bales, waiting for the market to open; for twice a week the Arabs hold a great fair before the walls of the caravansary.

ceasing only with the last strain. It would be hard to picture a more charming scene.

Sometimes, of an evening, the great double-door of the inn would open, and horses pranced into the courtyard. It was some aga of the neighborhood, who, wearying of his wives, desired to taste of occidental life, listen to the piano of the *roumis*, and drink the wine of France. "*One drop of wine is accursed*," says Mohammed in the Koran, but there are compromises even with the Law. As each glass was poured him, the aga, before drinking, took one drop upon his finger, shook it off gravely, and, that accursed drop once disposed of, he drank the rest without compunction of conscience. Then, quite dazed by the music and the lights, the Arab would recline upon the floor, enveloped in his burnous, — not uttering a word, but showing his white teeth with a laugh, and following the whirls of the dance with kindling eyes.

Alas! where are they now, — Mademoiselle Schontz's partners in the dance? Where are the sky-blue tunics, the charming hussars, with slender waists? Sleeping in the hop-fields of Wissenbourg, in the grassy meadows of Gravelotte. And no one comes now to drink the light wine of Alsace at Madame Schontz's caravansary. Both women are gone; they died, musket in hand, defending their inn, set on fire by the Arabs. Of the ancient hostelry once so full of life, nothing remains but the walls, the great crumbling framework of a building, so suggestive of death; these are still standing, but they are completely calcined. Jackals prowl

about in the courtyards. Here and there the fragment of a stable or a shed, which the flames have spared, rises like a living apparition, and the wind, that wind of evil omen, which for two years has stormed against our unhappy France, sweeping from the farthermost borders of the Rhine unto Laghouat, rushing from the Saar to the Sahara, passes on filled with plaintive echoes, wails through the ruins of the caravansary, beating against its gates mournfully.

DECORATED THE FIFTEENTH OF AUGUST.

ONE evening in Algeria, at the close of a day's hunt, a violent storm surprised me on the plain of Chélif, at some leagues from Orléansville. Nowhere the shade of a village or even of a caravansary in sight. Nothing but dwarf-palms, lentisk-thickets, and great stretches of plough-land reaching as far as eye could see. Moreover, the Chélif, swollen by the shower, had begun to roll in an alarming fashion, and I stood in some danger of passing the night out in a swamp. Fortunately, the civil interpreter of the Bureau at Millianah, who accompanied me, chanced to remember that quite near us, hidden behind a slight elevation, there was a tribe whose aga he knew, and we decided to go thither, and throw ourselves upon his hospitality for a night.

These Arab villages of the plain are so completely concealed among cactuses and Barbary figtrees that *gourbis* of dried earth are built so close to the ground that we were in the midst of the village before we had perceived it. Was it the hour, the rain, the intense silence that impressed me? I do not know, but an air of sadness seemed to brood over the land, as if the murder of some terrible [illegible] had suspended every activity. All about

scattered in the fields, was the neglected harvest. The wheat and barley had been gathered elsewhere, but here it was rotting upon the ground. Rusted ploughs and harrows lay about in the rain, apparently forgotten. All the tribe seemed to wear the same air of sadness, raggedness, and indifference. The dogs scarcely barked at our approach. From time to time, from within one of the gourbis, were heard the cries of a child, and a boy's shaven head, or the ragged haik of an old man could be seen in the thicket. Here and there young asses stood shivering among the bushes; but not a man, not a horse, was in sight; it seemed as if one had fallen upon war-times, as if every cavalier had departed from the place months before.

The aga's house, a species of long farm-building, with white walls and without windows, seemed as destitute of life as were the surroundings. We found the stables open, boxes and mangers empty, and not a groom in sight to receive our horses.

"Let us go into the Moorish café," said my companion. The *café maure* of an Arabian castellan serves as a sort of reception-salon, a house within a house, reserved for transient guests, — a place where these good Mussulmans, courteous and affable to an extreme, find opportunity to exercise their hospitable virtues, while preserving that privacy of family life which the Law commands. The *café maure* of Aga Si-Sliman was open and silent, like the stables. The high walls were coated with lime, decorated with trophies of war and ostrich-feathers; a long low divan ran about the hall, and

it was dripping from the torrents of rain with which the storm had pelted the entrance. Yet the café was not empty. First we saw the *cafetier* himself, an old Kabyle, in tatters, squatting with his head between his knees, beside a brazier turned upside down. Then we caught a glimpse of the aga's son, a beautiful boy, but feverish and pale; he reclined upon the divan, rolled up in a black burnous, two great greyhounds at his feet.

As we entered, there was no sound or sign of life. At the utmost, the head of one of the greyhounds may have moved, the boy perhaps deigned to glance in our direction, his beautiful dark eyes feverish and languid.

"And Si-Sliman, where is he?" asked the interpreter.

The old servant made a vague motion of the head in the direction of the horizon. The gesture seemed to say that his master had gone far, very far. We understood that Si-Sliman had departed upon some long and important journey, but as the rain would not permit of our setting out again, the interpreter, addressing a few words in Arabic to the aga's son, told him that we were friends of his father, and asked shelter for the night. The boy at once rose, and in spite of the fever which was consuming him, gave orders to the cafetier; then motioning us towards the divan, with a courteous air that seemed to say, "You are my guests," he saluted us, Arab-fashion, his head bowed, a kiss at the tip of his fingers, and wrapping his burnous proudly about him, left the hall with all

the gravity of one who was an aga and master of the house.

Left behind, the cafetier relighted his brazier, set upon it two boilers of microscopic size, and whilst he was making the coffee, we sought to obtain from him some details concerning his master's voyage, and the cause of the wretched condition of the tribe. The Kabyle spoke quickly, with the gestures of an old woman, but in a beautiful guttural, which was sometimes precipitated, sometimes interrupted by fits of silence, when we could hear the rain dropping upon the mosaic of the interior courtyards, the boilers singing, and the barking of jackals, scattered in thousands upon the plain.

This is what had befallen the unfortunate Si-Sliman. Four months before, on the 15th of August, he had received that famous decoration of the Legion of Honor, which he had awaited many years. He was the only aga of the province who had not already received it. All the others were knights, officers; two or three even wore about their haiks the big ribbon of Commander, and blew their noses upon it, innocently enough (many a time have I seen Bach' Aga Boualem make this use of his ribbon). What had prevented Si-Sliman from receiving the decoration was a quarrel he had had with his *chef de bureau arabe*, over a game of cards, and the military fraternity is so all-powerful in Algeria that, although the name of the aga had for ten years stood upon the list of proposed recipients, it was all to no avail. Consequently you can perhaps imagine the joy of brave

Si-Sliman when, the morning of the 15th of August, a spahi from Orléansville came to bring him the tiny gilded casket containing the brevet of Legionary, and Baïa, best-beloved of his four wives, fastened upon his camel's-hair burnous the cross of France. This furnished the tribe with the occasion for numerous revels and interminable *fantasias*. All night long, tambourines and reed-pipes resounded. There were dances, rejoicings, bonfires; I know not how many sheep were slain for the feast; and that nothing might be lacking on the occasion, a famous improvisator of Djendel composed in honor of Si-Sliman a magnificent cantata which began thus:

"Saddle thy coursers, O Wind!
Bear the glad tidings afar!"

The next morning, at break of day, Si-Sliman called to arms his contingent forces, both the ordinary and the reserve, and set out for Algiers with his cavaliers, that he might thank the governor in person. At the gates of the city his band paused according to custom. The aga presented himself unaccompanied at the Government Palace, saw the Duke of Malakoff, and assured the latter of his devotion to France, in a few pompous phrases of that Oriental style which is considered figurative and poetic, since for three thousand years it has likened all youths to palm trees, all women to gazelles. Having performed his duty at the palace, he proceeded to the upper town, permitting himself to be seen paying his devotions to the mosque as he passed on, distributing silver among the

poor, visiting barbers and embroiderers, buying for his wives perfumed waters, brocaded, flowered silks, blue corselets adorned with golden passementerie, and red cavalier's-boots for his young aga, paying for everything without questioning the price, and scattering his joy abroad in beautiful douros. He was to be seen in the bazaars, seated upon Smyrna rugs, drinking coffee at the doors of Moorish shops, the shop-keepers offering him congratulations. A crowd pressed about him curiously, whispering, "Look! that is Si-Sliman! The *Emberour* has just sent him the Cross." And many a little Morisca, returning from the bath and nibbling pastry, from beneath her white veil sent prolonged glances of admiration towards that beautiful new silver cross worn so proudly. Ah! life has indeed its great moments!

Evening come, Si-Sliman prepared to rejoin his band, and he had just mounted when a *chaouch* from the prefecture rushed towards him, quite out of breath.

"Here you are, Si-Sliman!—I have been hunting for you everywhere. Be quick! The governor wishes to speak with you."

Si-Sliman followed him, not disquieted in the least. But in crossing the Moorish courtyard of the palace he chanced to encounter his *chef de bureau Arabe*, who regarded him with an evil smile. That smile upon the face of an enemy terrified him, and he trembled as he entered the governor's chamber. The marshal, sitting astride a chair, received him.

"Si-Sliman!" he said with his usual brutality, and in that famous nasal voice that ever caused those about him to tremble, "Si-Sliman, my boy, I am very sorry. There has been a mistake. The decoration was not intended for you at all. It was for the kaïd of the Zoug-Zougs. You must return the cross."

The beautiful bronze face of the aga was tinged with sudden red, as if from the reflection of some forge fire. A convulsive movement shook his tall body. His eyes flamed. But the flash lasted only for a second. His eyes were lowered almost instantly; he bowed before the governor.

"Thou art master here, my Lord," he said, and unfastening the cross from his breast, he placed it upon a table. His hands trembled. Tears quivered at the end of his long eyelashes. Even old Pélissier was touched.

"Come, come, my brave, you will receive it next year;" and he extended his hand with an air almost friendly. The aga feigned that he did not see it, bowed without responding, and departed. He knew just how much value to attach to this promise of the marshal's, and suddenly realized that a mere bureau intrigue had brought this humiliation upon him.

News of his disgrace had already spread through the city. The Jews of Rue Bab-Azoun chuckled as they saw him pass. The Moorish merchants, on the contrary, looked away from him, pity stamped upon their faces; and it was this very pity that pained him more than the sneers of the others.

He hastened on, keeping close to the walls, seeking the lanes that were darkest, most secluded. The spot from which his cross had been plucked seemed to burn him, as though an open wound were there. And all the time he thought to himself, "What will my horsemen say? What will my wives say?"

Then followed wild outbursts of rage. He imagined himself waging a holy war yonder, upon the frontiers of Maroc ever reddened with incendiary fires and battle, or rushing through the streets of Algiers at the head of his band, pillaging the Jews, massacring the Christians, and at length slain himself, amidst a general tumult in which his shame should be blotted out. All these things seemed to him far less impossible than to return to his tribe. Suddenly, in the midst of his schemes of vengeance, a thought of the Emperor occurred to him like a sudden gleam of light.

The Emperor! For Si-Sliman, as for all the Arabs, that name was the embodiment of the highest justice and power. For these Mussulmans of the decadence he was the true pillar of their faith; that other head at Stamboul appeared to these distant sons as an imaginary being, a sort of invisible pope who had preserved for himself no other power than the purely spiritual. And in the Hegira of to-day, we know how much value that power possesses.

But the *Emberour*, with his big cannon, his zouaves, his iron-clad navy! From the moment he thought of the Emperor, he felt that he was

saved. Surely the Emperor would restore Si-Sliman's cross to him. There would be a week's journey, but he was so sure of the result that he desired his band to remain at the gates of Algiers to await his return. The packet-boat left the next day, bearing him towards Paris, and he was as serene and composed as though departing on a pilgrimage to Mecca.

Poor Si-Sliman! Four months ago he left, and the letters he sends to his wives do not hint of return as yet. For four months the unhappy aga has been wandering through the fogs of Paris, his days spent in running from one department to another, laughed at everywhere, caught within the formidable machinery of the French Administration, sent from bureau to bureau, soiling his burnouses against the wood-boxes of antechambers, anxiously awaiting an interview that will never come; and in the evening he is seen again — his tall, sombre figure ridiculous because of its very majesty — waiting for a key in the office of some lodging-house; and then he ascends to his own room, weary with tramping, with attempts that came to nothing, but lofty and proud as ever, clinging to a last hope, as furious in his zeal as some gambler who has staked his all, in pursuit of his honor.

All this time his cavaliers squatted about the Porte Bab-Azoun await him with the true Oriental fatalism of their race. His horses, tied to their pickets, neigh towards the sea. Among the tribe, all is suspense. The harvests rot upon the ground

for want of arms to gather them. Women and children count the days, their eyes ever turned towards Paris. And it is pathetic to see what ruin, how many hopes, how many fears, hang by that bit of red ribbon. And when will it all end?

"God alone knows," said the cafetier with a sigh, and looking through the open door he pointed with his bare arm across the sombre plain wrapped in violet mists, pointed towards the pale and slender crescent of the moon, climbing a cloudy sky.

MY KÉPI.

THIS morning I came across it again, where it had lain forgotten at the bottom of a closet; it was dust-stained, frayed at the edges, the figures were rusted, the color had faded, and it was almost shapeless. I could scarcely restrain a smile, and exclaimed, —

"Ah! There you are, my képi."

And suddenly I remembered that day towards the end of autumn, the warmth of the sunshine, the kindling of enthusiasm, — how I had gone down the street, proud of my new head-gear, knocking my gun against the shop-windows, as I went on my way to join the battalions of the Quarter and do service as citizen-soldier! Ah! he who had told me then that I was not going to save Paris, deliver France by my own unaided strength, would certainly have run the risk of receiving the point of my bayonet straight in the stomach.

There was such absolute faith in the national guard. In the public gardens and squares, along the avenues, at every corner, companies were gathering and numbering, — long lines in which blouses and uniforms, caps and képis, were seen side by side, for there was great haste. Every morning we who were new recruits assembled upon the

Place, beneath the low arcades, standing at the great gates in the draught and fog. After the roll-call, where hundreds of incongruous names mingled in a grotesque chaplet, the drill began. Arms straight at the sides, teeth clenched, the various divisions set out, keeping step, "Left, right! left, right!" and short and tall, infirm, *poseurs*, figures clad in uniforms that brought back memories of the stage, some of the new soldiers encumbered with immense blue bands that gave them the appearance of choristers, — all of us, however different our uniforms were, marched and faced about within our limited space with the utmost spirits and confidence.

All this would have seemed absurd enough had it not been for the deep bass of the cannon, a continual accompaniment, which lent freedom and scope to our manœuvres, drowned many a shrill and feeble command, atoned for many an awkwardness, many a blunder, and in this great melodrama of Paris Besieged lent just that sort of stage-music which proves itself so effective in the theatre, when the pathetic is to be added to a situation.

Finest sight of all when we mounted to the rampart! I still can picture myself on those foggy mornings, passing proudly before the Colonne de Juillet, and paying it military honors. "Carry — arms!" And then those long streets of Charenne, full of people, those slippery pavements where it was so difficult to mark step. Approaching the bastions, our drums would beat the charge,

Ran! Ran! I fancy now I am in the midst of it all again. It was so enchanting, that frontier of Paris, the green taluses with excavations for the cannon, the open tents full of animation, the smoke of bivouac fires, figures darkly outlined on the heights, — looking so diminutive as they wandered back and forth, — the tops of képis, and the points of bayonets rising here and there above the bags piled about.

Oh! my first night on guard, groping my way in the dark, in the rain, while the patrol passed on, jostling each other on the wet embankment, slipping out one by one, and leaving me, the last, perched above the Porte Montreuil at a formidable height. What beastly weather it was that night! In the deep silence that enfolded city and country nothing could be heard but the wind sweeping over the ramparts, making the sentinels bend before it, carrying away the password, and causing the panes of an old street-lamp on the road at the foot of the talus to rattle dismally. That infernal street-lamp! Every time I heard it I fancied it was the sabre of an Uhlan rattling, and I remained there, supporting arms, — "Who goes there?" ever on my lips. Then the rain grew colder. The gray of dawn began to appear in the direction of Paris. A tower, a cupola, could be distinguished. A cab was heard rumbling in the distance, a bell struck. The mighty city awoke from slumber, and shivering at the first moment of awaking, tossed about and gave signs of returning life. A cock crowed on the opposite side of the talus. At my

feet, beneath the still dark road over which my rounds were made, a sound of footsteps was heard, a rattling of iron, and in reply to my "Halt! who goes there?" uttered in a terrible tone, rose a little, timid, tremulous voice reaching me through the fog,—

"A woman selling coffee."

You smile? But what could be expected of us? These were the first days of the siege, and we fancied to ourselves, poor raw militia that we were, we imagined that the Prussians, under fire from the forts, would come to the foot of the ramparts, set their ladders there and scale them some fine night, in the midst of huzzas, with port fires moving to and fro in the darkness. Imagination anticipating such things as these, you can conceive that there were frequent alarms. Scarcely a night that the cry "To arms! to arms!" did not startle us from our sleep. Then men would shove and jostle each other in their haste to reach their guns, overturning them, while the startled officers exclaimed, "Keep cool! keep cool!" endeavoring thus to calm themselves. Later, at daybreak, we would perhaps discover that the enemy had been merely a runaway horse, capering about the fortification and nibbling the grass of the talus, and that our imaginations had mistaken one innocent animal for a whole troop of white cuirassiers, allowing it to serve as a target for an entire bastion in arms.

All these things my képi recalled to me — multitudinous emotions, various adventures and scenes: Nanterre, la Corneuve, le Moulin-Saquet, and

that delightful bend of the Marne where the intrepid Ninety-sixth saw fire for the first and last time. The Prussian batteries faced us, planted at the end of a road behind a thicket, and the smoke rising through the branches reminded one of some tranquil hamlet. Upon the unprotected track of the railroad where our chiefs had forgotten us, shells rained upon us with loud and terrible force, and ominous flashes were seen. Ah! my poor képi, there was no boasting that day, and again and again you made the military salute, lower perhaps than was fitting.

No matter! those are delightful memories; it is all slightly grotesque, no doubt, — still, a feather in the cap of patriotism. But alas! you recall other memories! Unhappily there were also those night-watches in Paris, our post some shop that was to let; within, the suffocating heat of a stove, the shiny benches; there were monotonous watches before the doors of some *mairie*, the Place covered with the slush of winter, which, melting, reflected the city in its gutters. While doing police-duty in the streets amid puddles of water, we would carry off drunken soldiers who had lost their way, women, and thieves; in the gray light of early morning we would return to our quarters weary, covered with dust, the smell of pipes and petroleum clinging to our clothing. And then there were those long days so foolishly spent, with elections of officers, attended by lengthy discussions, the tittle-tattle of each company, the farewell punches, and round upon round of brandy, men explaining each to the

other the plan of campaign, using matches to make their explanations clearer; there was the excitement of voting. Politics entered upon the scene, with her sister, righteous idleness. Hours were spent merely in lounging; difficult indeed to know what to do with one's self! And all that time wasted weighed upon a man as if he were surrounded by a lifeless atmosphere, making him desire to gesticulate, to keep in motion. There were hunts for spies, men entertained absurd suspicions of each other, and confidence equally exaggerated; they dreamed of a sortie *en masse*, of making a breach; all the follies and delirium of an imprisoned people had sway. These were the memories, hideous képi, that returned to me at sight of you. You too had your share in all these follies, and if on the day after Buzenval I had not tossed you to the top of a closet, had I done as so many others, who insisted on keeping their képis, decorating them with immortelles and gold stripes, merely to remain an odd number in some scattered battalion, who knows upon what barricade you might have dragged me at last? Ah! decidedly, képi of revolt and indiscipline, képi of idleness and drunkenness, of club life and gossip, képi of civil war, you deserve not even the waste corner which I allowed you in my closet.

Away with you! Into the waste-basket!

A TURCO OF THE COMMUNE.

HE was a little drummer of the *tirailleurs indigènes.*[1] His name was Kadour, he came from the tribe of Djendel, and he was one of that handful of *turcos* who dropped into Paris, following the fortunes of Vinoy's army. From Wissembourg to Champigny he had served through the campaign, crossing one battlefield after another, like a storm-bird, with his iron snappers and his *derbouka* (Arabian drum); so full of life he was, he seemed to be in so many places at once, that no bullet knew where to take him. But when winter came, the little bronzed African, glowing under the fire of grapeshot, could not endure those nights at the outposts, and the hours of immobility in the snow. One January morning he was picked up on the bank of the Marne, writhing with cold, his feet frozen. For a long time he remained in a hospital. It was there I saw him for the first time.

Sad, dumbly patient as a sick dog, the turco gazed about him with wide-open, gentle eyes. When some one spoke to him he smiled and showed his teeth. This was the only reply he could make, for our language was unknown to him, and he could scarcely even speak the *Sabir*, that Algerian

[1] Native African regiment.

patois composed of Provençal, Italian, Arabian, — made of that strange medley of words which time has gathered like sea-shells along many a Latin shore.

To divert himself, Kadour had only his *derbouka*. From time to time, when his weariness was too much for him, the drum was brought to his bedside and he was permitted to play upon it, but not too loudly, for fear of disturbing the other patients. Then his poor dark face, so lifeless and dull in the yellow daylight and amid the dismal wintry surroundings of the street, would grow animated again, covered with grimaces, as he followed the rhythm of each movement. Presently he would beat the charge, and his gleaming white teeth would show more and more, and he would smile ferociously; sometimes his eyes moistened as he beat a Mussulman morning-serenade, his nostrils would quiver, and breathing the foul air of the hospital, in the midst of phials and compresses, he saw once again the groves of Blidah, laden with oranges, the little Moriscas coming from the bath, enveloped in white and perfumed with vervain.

Thus two months passed. During that time much had occurred in Paris, but Kadour had not the slightest suspicion of all this. He heard the troops passing beneath his windows, weary and unarmed, the guns paraded, rolled about from morning till night, the tocsin, the cannonade. Of all this he understood nothing except that war had not ended, and that as soon as his limbs were healed he too would be able to fight again. At length,

one day he set out, his drum upon his back, in quest of his company, and he had not long to search. A group of Communists passing by led him to the Place. After a lengthy examination, as nothing could be gotten out of him except frequent repetitions of "*Bono bezef, machache bono,*" the general of the day finally presented him with ten francs and an omnibus-horse, and attached the turco to his own staff.

In the various staffs during the Commune, there was a little of everything, red blouses, Polish jackets, Hungarian jerkins, sailors' coats, gold, velvet, embroidery, and spangles. With his blue coat embroidered in yellow, his turban, and his *derbouka*, the turco added the finishing touch to the masquerade. Overjoyed to find himself in such fine company, intoxicated with the sunshine, the cannonading, and the turmoil of the streets, this confusion of arms and of uniforms, persuaded moreover that it was the war against Prussia that was being prosecuted with such inexpressible license and vigor, this deserter, who did not even know he had deserted, mingled naïvely in that great Bacchanal of Paris, and was the celebrity of the hour. Wherever he went, the Commune hailed him and feasted him. It felt such pride in possessing him that it exhibited, placarded, bore him about, as though he were a cockade. Twenty times a day the Place sent him to La Guerre, La Guerre despatched him to the Hôtel de Ville. For it had been so often observed that their sailors were no sailors at all, their artillery make-believe!

This at least was the real thing, a genuine turco. To be convinced of the fact, one need only look at the lively phiz of the young ape, and the savage strength of that little body rushing from place to place on his huge horse, pirouetting, capering about as if performing a fantasia.

One thing, however, was lacking to complete the happiness of Kadour. He longed to fight, to smell powder. Unfortunately, under the Commune, as before under the Empire, the staff saw little of that. Except during the time when he was parading, or busy upon errands, the poor turco passed his time on the Place Vendôme, or in the courtyards outside the war department, or in the midst of disorderly camps full of barrels of brandy always on tap, and tubs of bacon which had been smashed open, eating and drinking bouts following close upon the famine of the siege. Too true a Mussulman to take part in these orgies, Kadour held himself aloof, remained tranquil and sober, performing his ablutions in a corner, making his couscous with a handful of semolina, and after drumming a little upon his *derbouka*, would roll himself up in his burnous, and fall asleep upon a stone step, by the light of some bivouac fire.

One morning in the month of May, the turco was awakened by a terrific fusillade. At the war department all was commotion, men were running, fleeing. Mechanically he did as the others were doing, jumped upon his horse and followed the staff. The streets were full of terrified buglers, whole battalions were in utter confusion. Pave-

ments had been torn up to form barricades. Evidently something extraordinary was going on. As one approached the quay the fusillade was more distinct, the tumult greater. On the bridge of La Concorde, Kadour lost sight of the staff. A little farther on, his horse was taken from him. It was for an officer whose képi boasted eight stripes. He was in haste to witness what was happening at the Hôtel de Ville. Furious at losing his horse, the turco proceeded to run towards the thick of the fray. Rushing on, he loaded his chassepot as he went, muttering between his clenched teeth, "*Machache bono, Brissien;*" for all this tumult meant to him that the Prussians were entering Paris. Already the bullets had begun to whistle about the Obelisk and in the leafage of the Tuileries. At the barricade of the Rue de Rivoli the avengers of Flourens called out, "Hallo there! turco, turco!" There were not more than a dozen of them, but Kadour was worth an entire army.

Standing upon a barricade, gaudy and proud as a flag itself, leaping, crying, he fought amid a shower of grapeshot. The cloud of smoke rising from the earth lifted for a moment between two cannonades, and he could see red trousers massed about in the Champs Élysées. Then all became confused again. He thought he was mistaken, and let the powder speak once more in choicest accents.

Suddenly the barricade was silent. The last of the artillery had fled, despatching its final volley.

But the turco never budged. In his hiding-place, ready to spring, he adjusted his bayonet firmly, and waited for the pointed helmets. But what was this he saw? The line advancing! He heard the heavy tramp of the soldiers marching at quick pace, and above that the voices of officers exclaiming:

"Surrender!"

For a moment the turco was stupefied; then he advanced, his gun held aloft.

"*Bono, bono, Francèse!*"

Vaguely to his savage brain had come the idea that this was the army of deliverance, Faidherbe, or Chanzy, for which the Parisians had waited so long. How delighted he was! how he laughed, showing all his white teeth! In an instant the barricade was crowded. Men surround him, push him about.

"Let us see your gun."

It was still warm.

"Let us see your hands."

They were black with powder. The turco displayed them proudly, and still with that fine expansive smile of his. Then they shoved him against a wall, and — bang!

He died without once suspecting what it all meant.

THE CONCERT OF COMPANY EIGHT.

ALL the battalions of the Marais, and of the Faubourg Saint-Antoine were encamped that night in the barracks, along the Avenue Daumesnil. For three days the army of Ducrot had been fighting upon the heights of Champigny, and the rest of us had been prevailed upon to believe that we formed the reserve.

Nothing could have been more dismal than this encampment upon the *boulevard extérieur*, surrounded by factory-chimneys, closed stations, and deserted lumber-yards, lighted only by a few wine-sellers' shops. Nothing more glacial, more sordid, could be pictured than these long rows of wooden barracks, erected upon a ground dried and hardened by the cold of December; the frames of their windows were badly joined, the doors were always open, and the smoky lamps dimmed with the fog, like lanterns in the open air. It was impossible to read, to sleep, to remain seated. It was necessary to invent street urchins' games, merely to keep warm; men were seen beating their feet together, and running around the barracks. Such absurd inaction, so close to the field of battle, was as ignominious as it was enervating, especially on that night. Although the cannonade

had ceased, all felt that something terrible was about to happen above, and from time to time, when the electric search-lights of the forts flashed upon that side of Paris in their circular movement, silent troops could be seen massed along the edge of the pavements, and others ascending the avenue in sombre masses, apparently crouching close to the ground, and looking like pygmies, beside the high columns of the Place du Trône.

I was standing, almost frozen, hid in the darkness which wrapped those great boulevards, when some one said to me, —

"Come and see Company Eight. It seems they are having a concert!"

I went. Each of our companies had its own barrack. That of Company Eight was much better lighted than the others, and crammed with people. Candles fastened to the end of bayonets were flaming, clouded with black smoke. They shone in full upon these vulgar mechanics' faces, brutalized by drunkenness, cold, fatigue, and that wretched sleep taken while standing, — sleep which makes pale, sallow faces. In a corner, her mouth wide open, the cantinière was dozing curled up upon a bench, before her small table loaded with empty bottles and dirty glasses.

Some one was singing. As their turns came, *Messieurs les amateurs* mounted a stage improvised in the back of the room, and there they attitudinized, declaimed; draped in their blankets, they recalled melodramatic memories. I listened again to those robustious, ear-splitting voices, such as one

hears resounding from the extremity of some *passage*, or from those working-men's quarters, filled with clamorous children, noisy workshops, and bird-cages. Such a voice is charming to hear when it mingles with the music of tools, with an accompaniment of plane or hammer. But there upon that stage the sound was as absurd as it was painful.

First of all, we had the pensive working-man, a mechanic with a long beard, droning the woes of the proletary. "*Pauvre prolétair-o-o-o*" issued from deep down in his throat, in a song in which the Holy International has located its angers.

Then another came on, half asleep; he sang to us the famous song of the *Canaille*, but to an air so wearisome, slow, and doleful that one might have mistaken it for a lullaby, — "*C'est la canaille, — eh bien! j'en suis;*" and while he was chanting, we could hear the snoring of those who had sought corners determined to sleep, and with a grunt turned about trying to avoid the light.

Suddenly a white flash passed between the boards, and caused the red flame of the candles to pale. At the same time a heavy sound shook the barrack, followed by other sounds, heavier and farther away, which rumbled among the hills of Champigny, and then grew fitful and faint. The battle was beginning again. But *Messieurs les amateurs* scoffed at the very idea of a battle.

The stage itself and those four candles had stirred in all these people the indescribable instincts of the low comedian. It was curious to see how each lay

in wait for the last couplet of a predecessor, ready to snatch the ballad from his lips. They felt the cold no longer. Those who were upon the stage, those who descended it, and those who were awaiting their turn, a ballad at their tongue's end, all were perspiring, red in the face, their eyes kindled. Vanity kept them warm.

There were local celebrities present, among them an upholsterer-poet, who asked permission to sing a little song of his own composition, entitled the Egoist, with a refrain, *Chacun pour soi.*[1] And as he had an impediment in his speech, he could only say, "*egoift*," and "*facun pour foi.*" It was a satire upon the big-bellied bourgeois, who would rather sit by his own fireside than go to the outposts. I can still seem to see the fine head of this fabulist, who, with his képi askew, his chin-piece strapped about his chin, emphasized every word of his chansonnette, hurling maliciously at us that refrain, —

"*Facun pour foi — facun pour foi.*"

During this time cannon were making music too, mingling that profound bass with the roulades of the *mitrailleuses.* They told of the wounded dying of cold in the snow, they spoke of the agony upon the roadsides amid pools of frozen blood, they told of blinding shells, of shadowy death, stealing through the night on every hand. But the concert of Company Eight continued.

And now obscene songs began. An old *rigolo* with bloodshot eyes and red nose frisked about upon the stage, followed by a mad stamping of

[1] Each for himself.

feet, cries of "Again!" and bravos. The broad grin which greets obscenities permitted among men spread over all these faces. Suddenly the cantinière awoke, and hemmed in by the crowd, devoured by all those eyes, contorted her features into the semblance of a smile, while the old man shouted in his husky voice, "*Le bon Dieu, saoûl comme un* —."

I could stand it no longer. I left. My turn to be on duty was coming. So much the worse. I needed room, and air. I walked straight ahead, but slowly, towards the Seine. The river was dark, the quay deserted. Paris, wrapped in gloom, deprived of gas, was slumbering, encircled with fires. Everywhere the flash of the cannon, and from place to place, on the heights, the ruddy light of incendiary fires. Quite near to me, I heard low hurried voices, sounding quite distinctly through the cold air. They panted for breath, they cheered each other on.

"Ho! heave there —"

Suddenly the voices stopped, as if suspended because of some arduous and mighty labor which requires all one's strength. As I approached the edge of the quay, I was able to distinguish in that vague light, rising from the still darker waters, a gunboat which had been stopped at the Bercy bridge, and was trying to ascend the current. The lanterns, which shook with every movement of the water, the grating of the cables, which sailors were hauling, indicated the falls, the recoils, all the shocks of that struggle against the malevolence of the river and the night. Valiant little boat! how

impatient all these delays made her. She churned the water furiously with her wheels, making it splash and bubble where she stood. At last a supreme effort pushed her forward. "Courage, boys!" And when she had passed, and was advancing directly onward through the fog towards the battle which had summoned her, there rose a mighty cry of "Vive la France!" and echoed under the bridge.

Ah! that concert of Company Eight, how far away it seemed!

THE BATTLE OF PÈRE-LACHAISE.

THE guard began to smile.

"A battle here? — but there never was one. It was merely an invention of the newspapers. Listen, and I will tell you all that really happened. On the evening of the twenty-second, which was a Sunday, we saw thirty of the artillery of the Commune approaching, with a battery of two-inch guns, and mitrailleuse of the newest pattern. They stationed themselves on the highest ground of the cemetery, and as I was on guard in that especial section, I received them myself. Their mitrailleuse was at this part of the walk, near my sentry-box, their cannon a little lower, upon this terreplein. On their arrival, they compelled me to open several chapels. I thought they were going to smash everything to pieces and pillage in general. But arranging them in good order, and placing himself in their midst, their chief delivered this little discourse for their benefit: 'If one blackguard of you all touches anything, I will blow off his jaw. Break ranks.' He was an old white-haired fellow, with medals received for his services in Italy and the Crimea; his manner said he would permit no trifling. His men understood that he meant what he said, and I will do them the justice to say that

they did not take a single thing from one of the tombs, not even the crucifix of the Duc de Morny, which alone is worth two thousand francs.

"Nevertheless, they were a villanous rabble, these artillerymen of the Commune. The gunners of the occasion thought of nothing except how to spend their three francs and a half of extra pay. You should have seen the life they led in that cemetery! They piled in together to sleep in the vaults. They occupied the Morny tomb and the Favronne, that beautiful tomb where the Emperor's nurse is interred. They cooled their wine in the Champeaux tomb, where there is a fountain. They brought in women, and all night long they drank and made merry. Ah! I can assure you that our dead must have heard curious things.

"All the same, in spite of their want of skill those bandits did not a little harm to Paris. Their position was admirable. From time to time they would receive orders, —

"'Fire upon the Louvre!' 'Fire upon the Palais-Royal!'

"Then their old leader would direct the guns, and shells filled with petroleum descended upon the city at random. What was going on elsewhere below, none of us could tell. We heard the fusillade coming nearer and nearer, but the Communists were not in the least disturbed about that. With the battery-fires of Chaumont, Montmartre, and Père-Lachaise, it did not seem possible to them that the Versailles forces could advance. But that which sobered them a little was the first shell

which a naval regiment sent our way on arriving upon the hill at Montmartre.

"They had expected it so little! I myself was in their midst, leaning against the Morny monument, and smoking my pipe. Seeing the bombs coming, I had no more than time enough to throw myself upon the ground. At first our gunners believed it was a false aim, or that some one of their colleagues was drunk, but I can tell you, at the end of five minutes another flash from Montmartre, and another plum of the same sort arrived, aimed straighter than the first. That very moment these jolly blades dropped their guns and their mitrailleuse, and took to their heels without ceremony. The cemetery was not large enough to hold them. They cried as they ran, 'We are betrayed! We are betrayed!'

"The old man alone remained there, exposed to all the fire, worked like the very devil in the midst of his battery, and wept with rage to see that his gunners had all fled.

"However, towards evening, when paytime arrived, a few of them returned. Look, Monsieur, upon my sentry-box; the names of those who returned to get their money that night are still here." The old man called their names, inscribing them as he did so.

"'*Sidaine, present; Choudeyras, present; Billot, Vollon*—'

"As you see, there are not more than four or five, but they had brought women with them. Ah! I shall never forget that evening they were paid.

Below, Paris was in flames, the Hôtel de Ville, the Arsenal, the public granaries. In Père-Lachaise one could see as plainly as by daylight. The Communists attempted to return to their guns, but there were not enough of them; and besides, Montmartre terrified them. So they retreated into a tomb, and began to drink and to sing with their wenches. The old man had seated himself between those two great stone figures that stand at the portal of the Favronne tomb, and his face was terrible to behold as he watched Paris burning. He looked as though he knew his last night had come.

"After that moment I scarcely know just what happened. I returned to my own quarters, — that little shanty which you see yonder, hidden among the branches. I was very tired, and I threw myself upon the bed, still dressed, keeping my lamp lighted as though it was a stormy night. Suddenly rough knocking was heard at the door. My wife went to open it, all in a tremble. We thought it was the Communists, but they were marines, — a commandant, ensigns, and a physician. They said to me, —

"'Get up; make us some coffee.'

"I got up; I made their coffee. A murmur was heard in the cemetery, an indistinct movement as if all the dead had awakened for the last Judgment-day. The officers drank very quickly, all standing; then they took me out with them.

"The cemetery was filled with soldiers and sailors. I was placed at the head of a squad, and we began

to search the cemetery, tomb after tomb. From time to time, when the soldiers saw something stirring in the foliage, they would fire a shot towards the end of a walk, and it would graze a bust, or pass through some grating. Here and there they discovered some poor wretch hiding in the corner of a chapel. They made short work of him. That was what was in store for my artillery-men. I found them all, men and women huddled about my sentry-box, the old fellow with the medals standing beside them. It was no pleasant sight in that cold gray dawn. *Brrr!* But what stirred me most was to see a long line of the national guards, who at this very moment were being led from the prison of La Roquette, where they had passed the night. They climbed the broad pathway slowly, like a funeral procession. Not a word, not a complaint could be heard. These unfortunates were utterly crushed, exhausted. There were some who were asleep while they marched, and even the thought that they were about to die did not seem to awaken them. They were forced to march on to the extremity of the cemetery, and the fusillade began. One hundred forty-seven of them there were. You can imagine whether it lasted very long. And that is what is called the battle of Père-Lachaise."

Here the worthy man, perceiving his sergeant, left me quite abruptly, and I remained there alone, looking at his sentry-box and those names written upon it, by the light of Paris in flames, — the names of those who had returned to receive their last pay.

I pictured that night in May, pierced with shells, red with blood and flames, that great, lonely cemetery illuminated like some city on a day of festival, the guns left in the middle of the paths around the open vaults, — that orgy in the tombs, while near-by, surrounded by innumerable domes, columns, and stone images, which seemed alive in the light of those leaping flames, was that bust with the broad forehead, and the large eyes, — the bust of Balzac regarding the scene.

THE LITTLE PÂTÉS

I

THAT Sunday morning, the pastry-cook Sureau, of the Rue Turenne called his apprentice and said to him,—

"Here are Monsieur Bonnicar's little pâtés. Carry them to him, and return at once, for they say the army from Versailles has entered Paris."

The boy, who understood nothing of politics, put the pâtés, still warm, into his tart-dish, the tart-dish in a white napkin, and balancing pâtés, dish, and all upon his cap, set out on a run for the Saint-Louis, where Monsieur Bonnicar resided. The morning was glorious, sunshine everywhere,—that warm May sunshine that fills the fruit shops with bunches of lilacs and clusters of cherries.

In spite of the distant fusillade and the bugle calls at street-corners, all that venerable quarter of the Marais preserved its peaceful physiognomy. There was a suggestion of Sabbath in the air; voices of children were heard in the courtyards, tall girls were playing shuttlecock in front of their doors, and that little white outline trotting along the deserted street, a delicious perfume of hot pâté accompanying him, succeeded in imparting to this

morning of battle, a certain naïve and Sunday aspect. All the animation of the quarter seemed to be there in the Rue de Rivoli. Cannons were dragged about, men were working upon the barricades; at every step one came across groups of the national guards, very much busied. But the pastry-cook's boy did not lose his head. These youngsters are so accustomed to making their way through a crowd, so used to the hubbub of the street! It is on feast-days, when all is noise and bustle, on New Year's Days and Shrove Sundays, that they are kept busiest, running about; revolutions are scarcely a surprise to them.

It was really delightful to see that little white cap insinuating its way through képis and bayonets, avoiding collisions, keeping that tart-dish nicely balanced, sometimes hastening, sometimes compelled to move slowly, when one could plainly see it wished to rush on. What did it care about the battle? The chief thing was to reach the Bonnicars' just as twelve struck, and to receive as quickly as possible the little *pourboire* which was waiting there upon a shelf in the anteroom.

Suddenly the crowd began to push and shove terribly, and the pupils of the Republic passed by at a run, singing. They were from twelve to fifteen years of age, decorated with chassepots, red girdles, and big boots; no Mardi Gras masqueraders, running along a muddy boulevard, wearing paper caps and carrying a grotesque pink shred of a parasol, could have been prouder than they to be disguised as soldiers. And this time the jost-

ling was so great that the pastry-cook's boy found it difficult to maintain his equilibrium; but his tart-dish and he had slid along the ice so many times, had taken part in so many games of hop-scotch upon the sidewalk, that the little pâtés had ceased to feel any fear.

Unfortunately, all that excitement, those songs and red girdles, and his admiring curiosity, suddenly inspired the pastry-cook's boy with a desire to go farther in such fine company, and passing beyond the Hôtel de Ville and the bridges of Île Saint-Louis without even perceiving them, he himself borne onward, following that dust-stained, wind-swept, mad procession — how far he was carried, I do not know.

II.

FOR at least twenty-five years it had been the custom of the Bonnicars to partake of those little pâtés every Sunday. Exactly on the stroke of twelve, when the entire family — large and small — were assembled in the dining-room, a lively, cheery ring of the bell was heard, and every one would say, —

"Ah! it is the pastry-cook!"

Then there would be great bustling, the movement of chairs would be heard, the rustling of Sunday frocks; the children distributed themselves joyously about the table, already set, and all these happy bourgeois would seat themselves

around those little pâtés symmetrically piled upon a silver warming-dish.

But upon that Sunday the bell remained mute. Scandalized, Monsieur Bonnicar looked at his clock, a venerable affair surmounted by a stuffed heron, a clock which never in its lifetime had been either a moment fast or a moment slow. The children stared through the windows, watching the corner of the street where the pastry-man's apprentice usually appeared first. Conversation languished, and that hunger which noon with its twelve strokes of the clock usually awakes overcame every one, making the dining-room seem very large, very dreary, in spite of the antique silver gleaming upon the damask cloth, and the napkins twisted in the form of tiny horns, white and stiff.

Several times already the old servant had come to whisper in her master's ear that the roast was burnt, the little green peas overcooked; but Monsieur Bonnicar was determined not to sit down at table without the little pâtés, and furiously angry with Sureau, he determined to go and learn for himself what this unheard-of delay might mean. As he went out, brandishing his cane and very angry, his neighbors gave him warning, —

"Look out, Monsieur Bonnicar! People say the Versaillais have entered Paris."

But he would hear nothing, not even the sounds of the fusillade, which were coming from Neuilly across the water, not even the alarm-gun of the Hôtel de Ville, which shook every window of the quarter.

"Oh! that Sureau! that Sureau!"

And in the excitement and speed of his walk he talked to himself, imagining that he was already in the middle of the shop, hammering the floor with his cane, making the glass of the showcase and the plates of plum-cake tremble. The barricade of Pont Louis-Philippe interrupted his anger for a moment. Some Communists with ferocious mien were there, sprawling in the sunlight upon the pavement, whose stones had been removed.

"Where are you going, citizen?"

The citizen explained, but the story of the little pâtes appeared to arouse suspicion, especially as M. Bonnicar wore his fine Sunday-coat, his gold spectacles, and had every appearance of being an old *réactionnaire*.

"He is a spy," said the *fédérés*, "he must be sent to Rigault."

Whereupon, very willingly, four men who were not at all sorry to leave the barricade drove the exasperated and wretched man before them with the butt-ends of their guns. I do not know how they managed it, but half an hour later they were all captured by the Line, and were sent to join a long file of prisoners who were about to be marched to Versailles. M. Bonnicar protested more and more, raised his cane, and related his tale for the hundredth time. Unfortunately, that story concerning the little pâtes appeared so absurd, so incredible, in the midst of the great upheaval of the city, that the officers merely smiled at it.

"He is a spy," said the fedeles, "he must be sent to Rigaud!"

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ASNIÈRES-MOREAU

"That's a fine story, old fellow. You shall explain all about it at Versailles."

And through the Champs Élysées, white with the smoke of repeated firings, the column moved on between two lines of chasseurs.

III.

THE prisoners marched five abreast, their ranks closed and compact. To prevent the procession from scattering, they were compelled to walk arm in arm, and as the long column passed on, that human herd trampling the dust of the road, the sound resembled that of a heavy rain-storm.

The unhappy Bonnicar believed he must be dreaming. Panting, perspiring, dizzy with fear and fatigue, he dragged himself on at the end of the column, between two old hags who reeked of petroleum and brandy, and those about him who heard those words, "pastry-cook," "little pâtés," repeated again and again, amid imprecations, thought he had gone mad.

And indeed the poor man had lost his head. As they ascended the road, descended it again, when the ranks of the procession would open a little, did he not fancy he saw yonder, in the dust which filled the open space, the white jacket and the cap of that boy of Sureau's? And ten times at least M. Bonnicar seemed to see him upon the road. That tiny white flash passed before his eyes, as if to

mock him, then it would disappear again in the midst of a surging multitude of figures, some clad in uniforms, some in blouses, and others in tatters. At last, just at sunset, they arrived at Versailles, and when the crowd saw that old, spectacled bourgeois, haggard, untidy, and covered with dust, with one accord they discovered that he was a scoundrel of the deepest dye. They said, "It is Félix Pyat — no! it is Delescluze."

The chasseurs of the escort had some difficulty in conducting him safe and sound to the courtyard of the *Orangerie*. There for the first time that wretched procession was allowed to scatter, to stretch their limbs on the ground, and to regain their breath. Some were half asleep, others were swearing, coughing, weeping. But Bonnicar neither wept nor slept. Seated upon a stone stairway, his head buried in his hands, three fourths of him dead from hunger, shame, and fatigue, his mind reverted to all the incidents of that unhappy day, his departure from home, his companions at table anxiously waiting, the table standing until evening, expecting him still, and then the humiliation, the injuries, those gun-butts directed at him, and all this merely on account of an unpunctual pastry-cook!

"Monsieur Bonnicar! here are your little pâtés!" a voice near-by suddenly exclaimed; and raising his head, the worthy man was much surprised when he saw that pastry-cook's boy of Sureau's — who, it seems, had been captured along with the pupils of the Republic — uncover and present to

him the tart-dish concealed behind his white apron! And thus it happened that, in spite of the *émeute* and imprisonment, upon this Sabbath as on every other, Monsieur Bonnicar ate his little pâtés.

ABOARD: A MONOLOGUE.

Two hours ago every light was extinguished, every porthole closed. On the lower gun-deck, which serves us for sleeping-room, all is dark, oppressive, and stifling. I hear my comrades turning about in their hammocks, dreaming aloud, and groaning in their sleep. These days spent in utter idleness, where only the brain works until it is weary, lead to restless nights of fevered slumber, from which one starts again and again. And even that slumber will not come to me. I cannot sleep; my thoughts will not let me.

On the deck above the rain is falling. The wind is high. From time to time, when the watch changes, a bell at the bow of the ship rings through the fog. Every time I hear it I am reminded of Paris, and the six o'clock bell ringing in the factories all about us. There are plenty of factories in our neighborhood. I see our little lodging, the children returning from school, the mother seated in the back of the workshop, just finishing something which she holds up to the window, availing herself of the last bit of the waning daylight, until she comes to the end of her thread. Alas! what is to become now of everything there?

Perhaps it would have been better for me to take them with me, since I had permission. But then,

what could one expect? They would be so far away from home. I feared the effect of the voyage and change of climate upon the children. And then we would have had to sell our stock of trimmings, our little property brought together with such effort, collected piece by piece for ten years. And my boys could not have gone to school any longer. And their mother would have been compelled to live among a parcel of trulls! No, indeed! I would rather endure it all alone. And yet when I climb to the deck above, and see all those families seated there, as if they were quite at home, the mothers sewing, the children clinging to their skirts, I could almost cry every time.

The wind increases, the sea swells. The frigate sails on, pitching sidewise; the masts creak, the sails crack. We must be going very quickly. So much the better. I am almost anxious now to reach that Île des Pins, the mere thought of which terrified me so when I was sentenced. It will be the end of my journey, it will be a resting-place. And I am so weary. There are moments when all that I have seen during the past twenty months rises before my eyes again, and makes my head swim. The Prussian siege, the ramparts, the drill, the clubs, the civil interments, immortelles in one's button-hole, the addresses at the foot of the Column, the feasts of the Commune at the Hôtel de Ville, the reviews of Cluseret, those sorties, the battle, the station at Clamart, and all those low walls where we knelt to fire upon the gendarmes; and then Satory, the prison-hulks, the police, the

ing-man, and not as well paid. And yet these fellows do not complain, do not rebel at it. They look perfectly content, their clear eyes are resolute enough; and how they respect those who command them! It is plain to see that they have not frequented our clubs!

This is a storm indeed! The frigate tosses horribly, — leaping and creaking in all her timbers. Floods of water pour upon the deck, with a roar like thunder; after that, for five minutes at least, tiny gutters overflow on every side. There is a sudden stir about me. Some are sea-sick, others are afraid.

This enforced immobility in the hour of danger is the worst form of imprisonment. And to think that while we are huddled here like so many cattle, groping and tossed about in this sinister tumult which surrounds us, so many of those charming sons of the Commune with gilt tassels and red plastrons — all those play soldiers, cowards who drove us to the front — are placidly enjoying themselves in their cafés, in theatres at London, Geneva, and so near France. When I think of that it makes me furious.

Upon the gun-deck, all are awake now. They call from hammock to hammock, and as all of them are Parisians, they begin to joke and laugh, and chaff each other. I pretend I am still asleep so that they may let me alone. How horrible, what torture it is never to have a moment to one's self, to live in such a hive as this, to be obliged to grow angry when these others are, to talk as

they talk, make believe one hates what he does not, — all this that he need not be taken for a spy. And that endless, endless jesting of theirs! Good Lord! what a sea! Surely the gale is hollowing out great black chasms, into which the frigate plunges as it is whirled onward. Yes, surely, it was best that I did not take them with me. It is good to think in this hour that they are at home, safely sheltered in our little chamber. Deep in the gloom of the gun-deck, I fancy I catch the gleam from a lamp; it seems to fall upon the foreheads of the children, fast asleep; and their mother, leaning over them, muses, and works the while.

THE FAIRIES OF FRANCE.

A FANTASTIC TALE.

"THE prisoner may rise," said the presiding judge.

There was a sudden stir upon that hideous bench, where were seated the women accused of trying to set fire to the city with petroleum. A misshapen, shivering creature rose and leaned against the bar. She was a bundle of rags and tatters, patches, strings, old flowers and feathers, and above them all a poor faded face, brown and shrivelled and wrinkled; two tiny black eyes peered out from the wrinkles, twisting round and round like some lizard in the crevice of an old wall.

"What is your name?" she was asked.

"Melusine —"

"What did you say?"

She repeated very gravely, "Melusine."

Under the heavy moustache of a colonel of dragoons quivered a smile which the president concealed, and he continued without moving a muscle:

"Your age?"

"I have forgotten."

"Your calling?"

"I am a fairy!"

For one sudden moment the court, the counsel, even the government commissary himself, all burst out laughing; but that did not disturb her, and her clear, shrill, tremulous voice rose through the hall, and lingered like a voice heard in a dream. She continued, —

"Ah! the Fairies of France, where are they now? They are dead, all of them, my good sirs. I am the last. After me, none will remain. And in truth it is a great pity, for France was more beautiful when she had still her fairies. We were the poesy of the land, its faith, its candor, and its youth. All our favorite haunts, the hidden recesses of parks, overgrown with brambles, the stones about each fountain, the turrets of ancient castles, the mists shrouding each pool, and the great fens, all received from our presence a nameless magic gift which ennobled them. Through the luminous mist of legend and fantasy might be caught glimpses of us everywhere, trailing our skirts in a ray of the moon, flitting across the meadows, touching the tip of each grass-blade. The country-folk loved us, reverenced us. And fancy bred of innocence adored us, and even feared us a little, when she caught sight of our wands, our distaffs, our foreheads crowned with pearls. And so our springs remained unsullied. Even the plough would pause at the haunts we guarded, and as we, the oldest people in the world, made all respect old age from one end of France to the other, lofty forests were allowed to flourish, and stones crumbled into dust undisturbed.

"But the age has progressed. The days of railroads have come. Men hollowed out tunnels, filled up our ponds, and hewed down so many trees that we no longer knew where we might rest. And by degrees the country-folk themselves ceased to believe in us. One evening, when we knocked at his shutters, Robin said, "It is only the wind," and fell asleep again. Women came to dabble their washing in our pools. From that day all was ended for us. As we lived only in the popular faith, losing that we lost all. The virtue of our wands has vanished. Puissant queens we once were; now we appear to be old, old women merely, wrinkled, malicious, as are all forgotten fairies. Moreover, we must win our bread, and with hands that never yet learned to do aught. For a time we were to be seen in the forests, dragging loads of dead wood, or gleaning by the roadside. But the foresters were hard with us, the country-folk threw stones at us. Then, like the poor, when they can no longer earn their living in the country, we departed to seek work in the great cities.

"Some went into the mills, others sold apples at the bridges during the winter, stood at the church-doors selling beads. We pushed carts of oranges along, we offered to passers-by at a sou apiece bouquets that nobody wanted. The children mocked at us because of our hanging chins, the police made us move on, and omnibuses knocked us down. Then came sickness, privations, the hospital-sheet over us. That is how France has left her fairies to die. She has been punished for that.

"Yes, yes, smile, my good people. But, all the

same, we have seen what a country without fairies may become. We have seen our well-fed, sneering peasants open their chests for the Prussians, and direct them along our roads. You see, Robin no longer believes in sorcery, but he has also lost his faith in his country. Ah! if we had been there, we fairies, of all those Germans who entered France, not one should have returned alive. Our *draks*, our will-o'-the-wisps would have led them into the quagmires. Into every pure spring named for us we would have poured an enchanted potion that would have made them go mad. And at our meetings by moonlight, with a single magic word we would have confused the roads and rivers for them, entangled so thick with brambles and briars those hiding-places in the woods where they were always squatting that even the little cat-eyes of Monsieur de Moltke could not have told him where he was. Had we been there, the peasants too would have marched to fight. From the gorgeous flowers about our pools, we would have extracted balms to heal many a wound; gossamer-threads we would have used for lint, and on the battle-field the soldier would have beheld the fairy of his own canton hovering above his half-closed eyelids, to show him some glade, some hidden byway that might remind him of his native land. So we should have waged a national war, a holy war. But alas! in a country whose faith is dead, a land that no longer believes in fairies, such a war is impossible."

Here the thin, shrill voice paused for a moment and the judge interposed a word, —

"All this does not tell us what you were doing with the petroleum that was found upon you when the soldiers arrested you."

"I was setting fire to Paris, my good sir," answered the old "fairy," calmly enough. "I was setting fire to Paris — because I hate it, because its laugh spares nothing, because it is Paris that slew us, Paris that has sent its savants to analyze our beautiful, miraculous springs, and to say exactly how much iron and sulphur they contain, Paris that has mocked at us from its theatres. Of our enchantments it has made mere stage tricks, our miracles it has perverted into vulgar jests. So many vile beings have masqueraded in our rose-tinted robes, sat in our winged chariots, with Bengal fires for moonlight, that no one can think of us now without a smile. Once little children knew us by name, loved us, feared us a little, but instead of the beautiful gilded books full of pictures, wherein they learned to know our history, Paris to-day places in their hands *Science adapted to children*, big, musty volumes which make their heads tired and fill their baby-eyes with a dull dust that effaces every image of our enchanted palaces and magic mirrors. Oh, yes! I should have been overjoyed to see it in flames — your Paris. It was I that filled the cans of the petroleum-women, I myself that led them to the best places, saying, 'Come, my children, burn everything, — burn! burn!'"

"Decidedly this old woman is mad," said the judge. "Lead her away."

PART II.

CAPRICES AND SOUVENIRS.

CAPRICES AND SOUVENIRS.

A BOOK-KEEPER.

"BR-R-R! how foggy it is!" said the good man, as he stepped into the street. He pulled up his collar quickly, drew his muffler over his chin, and with bent head, and hands buried in his back-pockets, he set out for his office, whistling as he went.

And foggy indeed it was. In the streets this fog is not so noticeable; in the heart of a great city it vanishes as quickly as the snow does. Roofs intercept it, walls absorb it, some of it finds a way into the houses every time the door is opened; it clings to the steps, making them slippery and the railings humid. The rolling of carriages, the coming and going of passers-by — those poor way-farers of early morning, always in haste — cut the fog, scatter it, and carry some of it onward. It clings to the shabby, scant clothing of petty clerks on their way to work; it clings to the water-proofs of shop-girls, to their flimsy little veils, to the big oil-cloth boxes in which they carry their work. But on the still deserted quays, upon the bridges, the banks, the river, rests a heavy mist, opaque, immovable; through it the sun is rising

"Anything for us?" he asks as he passes. The wagoner replies,—

"Yes, sir, and something pretty this time."

He enters his office quickly. How comfortable and warm it is within! In a corner the stove roars; his foot-warmer is in its place; his little arm-chair awaits him in the brightest part of the room, by the window; the fog curtains its panes, making a subdued, even light, and big books with green backs, stand in a methodical row upon their rack. A genuine notary's cabinet.

The man breathes freely. He is at home.

Before setting to work he opens a great closet, brings out his lustrine sleeves which he puts on carefully, draws forth a little, red earthen-ware plate and some lumps of sugar, which came from some café, and begins to peel his apples, gazing about him with a satisfied air. And surely it would have been impossible anywhere to find a cheerfuller, brighter office, or one more orderly in every arrangement. But there was one singular thing, and that was the sound of water which one could not help hearing on every side — water everywhere, enveloping you as though you were in the cabin of a ship. Below lay the Seine, roaring, dashing against the arches of the bridge, breaking in billows of foam at that point of the Île, always encumbered with planks and piles and wreckage. And even within and around the office there was the drip! drip! of water thrown in pitcherfuls, the plash of water washing heavily upon something within. Why, I know not, but the very sound of

that water made one shiver just to hear it. One felt that it fell upon a hard floor, upon great slabs, upon marble tables which made it still colder than before.

What, then, do they wash again and again in this strange house? What ineffaceable stain is here?

At moments, when the splashing ceases below, drops are heard falling one by one as after a thaw or a heavy rain. One might think that the fog gathered upon roofs and walls were melting from the heat of the stove, and trickling ceaselessly.

But the man takes no notice of it. He is completely absorbed in his apples, which begin to sing in the red earthen-ware plate, exhaling a delicate perfume of caramel; and that delightful song prevents his hearing the drip of the water, the sinister drip of the water.

"Whenever you choose, recorder," speaks a husky voice from a side-room. He glances at his apples, and leaves the room regretfully. Where is he going? Through the door which opens for a minute, comes a chilly and unwholesome breath, smelling of reeds and marshes, and there is seen what seems to be a glimpse of clothes drying upon a line, faded blouses, smocks, a calico robe hanging at full length by the sleeves, and dripping, dripping.

That part disposed of, he returns to his office, and places upon his table a few small articles soaked with water; and, chilled, he turns towards the stove to warm his hands, which are red with cold.

"Any one must be crazy to choose such weather

as this," he says with a shiver; "what ails them all, I wonder?"

And as he is warm again, and his sugar has begun to form little crystal drops around his plate, he sits down to eat his breakfast upon a corner of his desk. As he eats, he opens one of his registers, and turns its leaves complacently. The big book is so well kept! — ruled lines, entries in blue ink, minute reflections of gold powder, blotters at every page, care and order apparent everywhere. It seems that his business is thriving, for the worthy man's face wears a satisfied air, like that of an accountant after an annual stock-taking that has turned out well. And while he turns over the pages of his book with delight, the doors of the side-chamber open, the sound of many footsteps is heard upon the flagstones, and voices saying in a half-whisper, as if in church, —

"Oh! how young she is! What a pity!"

And they elbow and push forward, whispering still.

What does it matter to him that she is young? Tranquilly finishing his apples, he sets before him the articles he brought in a little while ago. A thimble, full of sand, a pocketbook with a single sou in it, a little pair of rusty scissors, so rusty that they will never be used again, oh! never again; the little book which registers her as working-girl — its leaves glued together; a tattered letter, almost effaced, of which may be deciphered a few words: "The child . . . no money . . . a month's nursing . . . "

The book-keeper shrugs his shoulders with an air that seems to say, —

"We have heard that before." Then he takes his pen, brushes away carefully the crumbs of bread which have fallen upon his ledger, makes a movement preparatory to placing his fingers in good position, and in his best hand writes the name he has just deciphered upon the mouldy book.

Félicie Rameau, burnisher: age, seventeen years.

"WITH THE THREE HUNDRED THOUSAND FRANCS WHICH GERARDIN PROMISED ME!"

After a two hours' walk in Paris, when you had left home with light tread, and gay-hearted, have you never returned out of sorts, depressed by a sadness for which you could ascribe no cause, an incomprehensible weariness? You ask yourself what ails you, but seek in vain for an answer to the question. Your walk had led you through pleasant paths; it was dry underfoot, and the sun shone brightly, and yet your heart is touched with a pain and sorrow that linger like the memory of some past grief.

For in this mighty Paris, with its multitude of people who feel themselves free and unobserved, it is impossible to take a step without jostling against some intrusive misery that besprinters the passer-by, leaving its ineffaceable mark. I am speaking not merely of those misfortunes with which we are familiar, in which we are interested, of those disappointments of some friend, which seem in some slight degree our disappointments also, which oppress our hearts with a pang almost of remorse when we encounter them suddenly; neither do I speak of the troubles of those for

whom we feel mere indifference, to whom we listen with one ear only, scarcely suspecting that we are distressed at all; I speak of those sorrows which are quite alien to our lives, of which we catch only a passing, momentary glimpse while rambling about through the crowded streets.

Fragments of dialogues are heard, interrupted by the noise of vehicles; some of these wayfarers are preoccupied, deaf, and dumb; they soliloquize loudly, with wild gestures; their eyes glitter feverishly, and their shoulders droop from weariness. Others there are whose pale faces are swollen with weeping, black-veiled mourners whose recent tears are scarcely dried. And then those trivial details which seem to elude notice! That figure whose well-worn coat, shiny from frequent brushings, shuns the bright daylight; another seated beneath a porch turning a barrel-organ that has lost its notes; a hunchback who wears about her neck a velvet ribbon, stiffly tied between her misshapen shoulders. You sight these unfortunates, strangers to you, merely for a moment, and forget them as you pass on, but they have brushed against you, you have felt some passing contact with their wretchedness, your very garments are impregnated with the weariness that follows in their footsteps, and at the day's end, you feel a restlessness, a sense of depression; for at some street-corner, at the threshold of some home, unconsciously you have touched the invisible thread that binds so closely the existence of all these wretched ones that the least shock to one is felt by all.

I was thinking of this the other morning, for it is especially during the morning that the misery of Paris may be seen at its worst. I saw, walking in front of me, a poor lean devil in a coat much too small for him, which seemed to make his long legs still longer, and to exaggerate tremendously all his gestures. He was walking very fast, bent almost double, swaying like a tree tossed by the wind. From time to time he would put his hand in one of his back pockets and break off a bit of a small roll concealed there, devouring it furtively, as if ashamed to eat in the street.

When I see masons seated upon the sidewalks, nibbling the heart of a fine fresh loaf, it gives me an appetite. I envy too, each humble clerk rushing back from the bake-shop to his work, pen behind his ear, and his mouth full, quite exhilarated by this meal in the open air. But this man wore the shamefaced air of one who knows what real hunger means, and it was pitiful to see this unfortunate afraid to eat more than the tiniest morsels of the bread he was crumbling within his pocket. I followed him for a moment, but suddenly, brusquely, as frequently happens with these dazed beings, the trend of his thought was changed, and turning around, he found himself face to face with me.

"Holloa, is it you?" I chanced to recognize him as an acquaintance, one of those fomenters of schemes that spring up in innumerable numbers from the very pavement of Paris, an inventor, a founder of impossible journals, which for a space

make no end of talk in print, and are advertised on every side. Three months ago he had disappeared in a formidable plunge. After a few days' bubbling of the waters where he fell, the surface of the tide was as smooth as ever, the waters closed again, and no one thought further about him. He was disturbed at seeing me, and in order to cut short all questioning, and doubtless also to divert attention from his sordid appearance, his half-pennyworth of bread, he began to talk very rapidly, in a tone of assumed gayety. His affairs were progressing finely, finely! A little at a standstill just at present, but this would not be for long. At this very moment he was considering a magnificent undertaking, nothing less than a great industrial journal, illustrated! Much money in it, and a splendid contract, superb advertising! His face grew more and more animated as he talked. His figure straightened itself. By degrees, he began to assume a protecting tone, as though he fancied himself already seated at his editor's-desk. He even asked me to furnish some articles, adding in a triumphant voice, —

"And you know, it's an assured thing; I shall begin with the three hundred thousand francs that Girardin has promised me!"

Girardin!

That is the name forever upon the tongue of all these visionaries. When I hear it pronounced, I seem to see new quarters, huge buildings never completed, journals just fresh from print, with lists of subscribers and directors. How often I have

heard it said of some senseless project, "We must speak about that to Girardin!"

And in this poor devil's brain also had come the idea that he must mention his scheme to Girardin! All night long he had been preparing his plan, figuring upon it. Then he had started out, and as he went on, to his excited fancy it had all looked so fine that at the moment of our encounter it seemed absolutely impossible to him that Girardin could think of refusing that three hundred thousand francs. And in stating that they had been promised to him the poor wretch told no falsehood, for his words were merely the continuation of his dream.

While he was talking, we were jostled and pushed against a wall. We stood upon the sidewalk of one of those bustling streets leading to the Bourse and the Bank; it was filled with people rushing on distractedly and absorbed in their own affairs, anxious shop-keepers in haste to pay their notes, petty speculators, with coarse faces, hurling quotations in each other's ears as they passed by. And listening to all these fine projects in the midst of that crowd, in that quarter where speculation runs riot, where all these players of the game of chance impart their feverish haste to every one, I shuddered as one might to hear the tale of some shipwreck recited in mid-ocean. For I saw all that this man was telling me actually written upon the faces of those about us; all his catastrophes, all his radiant hopes could be read in their wild, dazed eyes. He left me as suddenly as he had accosted

me, and plunged headlong into that whirl of folly and illusions and lying hopes, all that which men of this sort refer to in a serious tone as "affairs."

At the end of five minutes I had forgotten him, but at night after I had returned home, when I had dispelled the memory of all the sad sights of the day in shaking the dust of the streets off my feet, I seemed to see again that wan, worried face of the man with his morsel of bread, seemed to see the gesture that emphasized those pompous words, "With the three hundred thousand francs which Girardin has promised me!"

ARTHUR.

SOME years ago I occupied a tiny box of a house in the Champs Élysées, in the Passage des Douze-Maisons. Picture to yourself an out-of-the-way corner of that faubourg, nestling in the midst of those great, aristocratic avenues, so cold, so tranquil, along which it seems that no one ever passes except in an equipage. Whether the caprice of their owner was some insane freak of avarice or a mania for old things, I do not know, but there in the midst of this beautiful quarter, he had allowed those waste spaces to remain, with little mouldy gardens, low houses crookedly built, the staircase on the outside, and wooden terraces covered with linen spread to dry, rabbit-cages here and there, lean cats, and famished tame crows. Here also had installed themselves mechanics, petty pensioners, some few artists — the latter always to be found where trees are left — and in addition to all this, there were two or three lodging-houses of sordid aspect, which looked as if begrimed with the poverty of generations. All around was the stir and splendor of the Champs Élysées, an incessant rumbling, the clatter of horses' hoofs, and the sound of *portes-cochères* opening heavily; barouches roll by, shaking the portals as they pass,

the muffled sound of pianos and the violins of Mabille Garden are heard; outlined against the horizon stand great, silent houses, with swelling fronts, their windows shaded with light, silken curtains, while behind the tall panes of spotless glass gleam golden candelabra and jardinières filled with rare flowers.

To enter that dark passage-way of the Douze-Maisons, standing in the midst of the beautiful scenery of the neighborhood, and lighted at one end by a single street-lamp, seemed like stepping behind the scenes in a theatre. The spangles that decorated all this luxury found a refuge there: liveried lace, the clown's tights, a vagabond world of circus-riders, English ostlers, two tiny postilions of the Hippodrome, with their twin ponies and advertising-placards; goat-carts, punchinellos, wafer-sellers, and a whole tribe of blind men returned at evening, loaded with camp-stools, accordions, and bowls. One of these blind men was married while I lived in the passage, and the event was the occasion of a concert which lasted all night long; a fantastic concert where clarionets, hautboys, hand-organs, and accordions mingled, while that procession paraded the various bridges of Paris, to the droning sound of their various instruments. But ordinarily the passage was very quiet. These nomads of the street never returned till dusk, and then they were tired enough. There was rarely a racket except on Saturday, when Arthur received his week's pay.

Arthur was my neighbor. A tiny wall, pro-

longed by a trellis, separated my *pavilion* from the lodging-house in which he dwelt with his wife, and so, in spite of myself, his life and mine came in contact for a time, and every Saturday I was compelled, without losing a single word of it all, to listen to the horrible drama so often enacted in the homes of mechanics of this sort, a drama so Parisian in its details. It always began the same way. The wife would prepare dinner, the children gathering about her. She talked to them in a gentle voice, and was very busy. Seven o'clock, eight o'clock, and no one came. As the hours passed her voice changed in tone, became nervous and tearful. The children grew hungry and sleepy, and began to whine. But the husband did not return. They ate without him. Then, the little brood in bed, the children asleep, she would appear upon the wooden balcony, and I could hear her whisper between her sobs, "Oh, the blackguard, the blackguard!"

Neighbors would find her there, and try to sympathize.

"Come, come, go to bed, Madame Arthur. You know he'll not be home to-night. It's pay-day."

Then advice and gossip would follow.

"I know what I'd do if I were in your place. Speak to his employer about it. Why don't you?"

All this talk merely made her weep the more, but she persisted in hoping and waiting; and, completely worn out, after every door was shut and the passage silent she would remain there leaning

upon her elbow, believing herself quite alone; absorbed by a single, fixed idea, she would repeat to herself quite loudly the story of all her misfortunes, with the abandon of one who has lived half her life in the streets. They were behindhand with their rent, every tradesman harassed them, the baker refused them bread, — and what would she do if her husband returned again without money? At last she was too weary to do more than count the hours and watch belated passers-by. She would re-enter, but long afterwards, when I thought all was over, I would hear a cough quite close to me upon the balcony. The poor woman was there again. Her restlessness would not permit her to remain within. She peered into the dark street, ruining her eyes, and seeing nothing but her own wretchedness.

Towards one or two o'clock, and sometimes much later, some one would be heard singing at the end of the lane. Arthur was returning. More frequently than not he would come dragging a boon-companion along with him to the very door, insisting, "Come in, come in." And even at the door he loitered, unable to decide whether or not he would enter, for he knew well what awaited him within. As he climbed the stairs the heavy sound of his footsteps echoed through the silence of the slumbering house, and filled him with an uneasy sensation, not unlike remorse. He talked aloud, pausing before each hovel to remark, "Good evening, Ma'me Weber; good-evening, Ma'me Mathieu." If no one answered, he burst forth with

a volley of abuse, and all the windows opened to return his maledictions. That was what he wished. In his drunken state he loved brawling and noise; and all this warmed him so that he became quite angry, less afraid to enter, when he reached his own quarters.

For that moment of entering was a terrible one.

"Open: it is I."

Then I would hear the woman's bare feet upon the floor, the striking of matches, and the story the man attempted to tell her as he entered; it was always the same: his comrades had led him away. "What 's-his-name — you know whom I mean — he works on the railroad — Well! he — "

The wife paid not the slightest attention to this.

"And your money?"

"There is none left," Arthur's voice would reply.

"You lie!"

And he did. No matter how deeply under the influence of liquor, he always left a few sous unspent, anticipating the return of his thirst on Monday. And it was this small remnant of his week's earnings that she tried to wrest from him. Arthur struggled, disputed the point.

"Did n't I tell you I drank it all?" he would cry. Without response she would descend upon him with all the strength her indignation and overstrung nerves had gathered. She shook him, ransacked, turned his pockets inside out. In a few moments the sound of money rolling upon the ground would be heard; the woman would grasp it eagerly with a triumphant laugh.

"There! you see now!"

Then followed an oath, the sound of blows descending heavily; the drunkard was taking his revenge. Once he had set out to beat her, he never paused. All that was vilest, most pernicious in these dreadful pothouse wines mounted to his brain, and those fumes must work off their effects in some way. The woman howled, the last bits of furniture in their hovel were smashed to pieces, the children, startled from their sleep, cried with fright, and all along the passage windows opened, and listeners remarked, —

"It is Arthur! It is Arthur!" Sometimes the father-in-law, an old rag-picker who lived in the neighboring lodging-house, would come to his daughter's rescue. But Arthur would lock the door that he need not be disturbed in his task. Then, through the locked door, a frightful dialogue would ensue between father and son-in-law, and we would catch charming fragments such as these:

"Your two years in prison were not enough for you, you scoundrel!" the old man would exclaim. And the drunkard would reply in a superb tone:

"Well! — I did spend two years in prison! What of that? At least I have paid my debt to society! Try to pay your own."

It seemed a very simple matter to him: "I stole — you put me in prison. We are quits."

However, when the old man was too persistent Arthur would grow impatient, open his door, and fall upon father-in-law, mother-in-law, and neighbors, and like Punchinello fight the whole world.

And yet he was not badly disposed. Many a Sabbath, on the day after one of these murderous assaults, this pacified drunkard, with not a sou left for a drink, would pass the day at home. Chairs were brought forth from various rooms. Ma'me Weber, Ma'me Mathieu, and indeed all the lodging-house, would install themselves upon the balcony and converse. Arthur played the agreeable, was the leading spirit; you would have taken him for one of those model mechanics who are constant attendants at evening-school. He assumed for the occasion a lamb-like, mild voice, declaimed fragments of ideas gathered a little from every source, thoughts concerning the rights of the working-man, the tyranny of capital. His poor wife, somewhat subdued from the effects of the beating received the night before, regarded him admiringly; nor was she his only admirer.

"Ah, that man, Arthur! if he only would!" Ma'me Weber often murmured with a sigh. To add the finishing touch, these ladies would ask him to sing. And he would sing that song of M. de *Belanger*, "The Swallows." Oh! that throaty voice, full of artificial tears, the working-man's inane sentimentality! Beneath the tarred-paper, mouldy veranda, old clothes were spread out in every direction, but between the lines a glimpse of the blue sky was seen, and all that vulgar crowd, charmed with the unreality of his attitudinizing, rolled their moistened eyes heavenward.

But all this did not hinder Arthur from spending his week's pay for drink on the following Saturday

night, and beating his wife as usual; neither could it hinder the fact that in that wretched rookery was a whole hive of little Arthurs like their father, waiting only until they arrived at his age to squander their pay upon drink and beat their wives also. And that is the race that would govern the world. "*Ah! maladie,*" as my neighbors of the passage used to say.

THE THIRD READING.

As true as my name is Bélisaire, and I have my plane in my hand at this moment, if Papa Thiers imagines that the fine lesson he has taught us will be of the slightest use to us, it is because he does n't know the people of Paris. You see, monsieur, they may shoot us wholesale, transport us, export us, add Cayenne to Satory, and pack the prison-ships as close as sardines in a barrel, but the true Parisian loves a riot, and nothing can destroy that taste of his. We have it in our blood. What would you? It is n't politics so much that amuses us, but the noise it makes, the closed workshops, the gatherings, the lounging here and there; yes, and there's another thing I scarcely know how to explain to you.

To understand it, one should have been born where I was born, Rue de l'Orillon, in a carpenter's work-shop, should have served an apprenticeship from the time he was eight until he was fifteen years old, trundling a hand-barrow filled with chips along the faubourg. Ah! well! I can truly say I had my fill of revolutions in those days. Little though I was then, standing no higher than these boots of mine, — there was nothing lively astir in Paris but I was sure to be found on the spot. And

generally I knew in advance what was afoot. When I saw workmen walking arm in arm through the faubourg, taking up the entire sidewalk, while women stood at their doorways, chattering, gesticulating, and a great mob of people issued from the barrières, I said to myself as I wheeled on my chips, "We are in for it now! Good enough! something's up!"

And in fact there always was. Going home of an evening, I would enter the shop, and find it full of people; friends of my father's were discussing politics around his bench; some neighbors had brought him in the newspaper, for in those days you could not buy one for a sou, as at present. Those in the same house who wished to take it clubbed together, a number of them, and passed it round from story to story. Papa Bélisaire, who was never idle no matter what happened, kept his plane angrily at work as he listened to the latest news, and I remember, too, that on such days as those the moment we seated ourselves at the table the mother never failed to say to us, —

"Keep quiet, children, your father is out of sorts on account of political affairs."

You may well believe I did not understand very much of their cursed politics. All the same there were a few words that would force themselves into my head through hearing them so often, as for instance, —

"That rascally Guizot, who has gone to Gand —"

I did n't understand very clearly who that Guizot was, nor what going "to Gand" might mean, but

what odds! I repeated again and again with the others, —

"*Canaille de Guizot! canaille de Guizot!*"

And I was all the more pleased to refer to that poor Monsieur Guizot as "*canaille*" on account of the fact that in my mind I had confounded him with a big scoundrel of a policeman who was on duty at the Rue de l'Orillon, and made my life miserable for me on account of my barrow of chips. There was no love lost between the quarter and that big, red-faced fellow. Children, dogs, every one was at his heels; there was, however, a wine-seller who used to try to gain him over by slipping a glass of wine to him through a small opening in his shop. The big red face would come nearer and nearer, with an innocent air, and glance from right to left to see that none of his superiors were about, then, as he passed — whew! I've never seen any one else toss down a glass of wine as quickly as he did! Sly fellow! one had only to lie in wait for the moment when his elbow was raised to his mouth, steal behind him, and cry out, —

"Look out! *sergo!* The officer's coming."

The people of Paris are all just like that. The policeman bears the brunt of everything. For every one is accustomed to hate these poor devils, to regard them as curs. If the ministry commit follies, the police pay the penalty, and once a glorious revolution is in progress, the ministry depart for Versailles, the policemen are thrown into the canal.

But to return to what I was telling you, —

whenever there was anything of importance going on in Paris, I was one of the first to know it. On those days all the small fry of the quarter would hold their meetings too, and together we would go down the faubourg. We could hear people exclaiming, "It is at Rue Montmartre! no — at Porte Saint-Denis." Others, whose business took them in that direction, would return, furious, because they had been unable to pass. Women were seen running towards the bakers' shops. Carriage entrances were closed. All this excitement went to our heads. We sang as we passed by, we jostled the little street vendors, who were quickly gathering up their goods and their baskets, as if it were some terribly stormy day. Sometimes when we reached the canal the bridges of the locks were already turned. Fiacres and trucks were compelled to wait there. Cabmen were cursing, and every one was uneasy. On the run we would scale the steps of the foot-bridge which at that time separated the faubourg from the Rue du Temple, and then we reached the boulevards.

Oh! what fun upon the boulevard on the day of *mardi gras* or on the day of a riot! Scarcely a carriage to be seen. One could rush along at his ease upon the driveway. When they saw us pass, the shopkeepers of every quarter knew well what it meant, and closed their shops quickly. We heard the clatter of shutters, but once their stores were closed these people would occupy the sidewalk in front of their doors, for with the Parisian no feeling is stronger than that of curiosity.

At last we would perceive a black mass, the mob itself, obstructing all travel. There it was! But to see it properly one must stand in the first row; and I can tell you, one was well thumped before he got there. However, by dint of shoving, jostling, sliding between the legs of others, we at last got where we wanted to be. Once we had taken our places in front of everybody, we breathed more freely, and were proud enough. And indeed the spectacle was worth all the trouble of getting there. No, believe me, neither Monsieur Bocage nor Monsieur Mélingue ever gave me such a flutter of the heart as that I felt when, looking ahead, in an open space at the end of the street I saw the chief of police advancing, decorated with his sash.

I heard the others exclaim, "The *commissaire!* the *commissaire!*"

But I said nothing. My teeth were tightly closed through pleasure and terror combined; what I felt was indescribable. I thought to myself, —

"The *commissaire* has come! Now look out for blows from his club."

It was not so much the blows from his club that impressed me as that big devil of a man himself, with his sash upon his black swallow-tail coat and that huge hat *de monsieur* he wore, which gave him the appearance of being out visiting, as it rose in the midst of all those shakos and cocked hats. That made a tremendous impression upon me. After a flourish from the drum, the chief of police began to mumble something. He was so

far from us that in spite of the intense silence his voice was lost in air, and all we could hear was —

"*Mn — mn — mn —*"

But we were as thoroughly posted as himself about the riot laws. We knew that we were entitled to three readings of the Riot Act before his stick could whack us. At the first reading no one budged an inch. We stood there undisturbed, our hands in our pockets. It is true that when the drum beat the second time some began to grow green, and to look right and left, to see which way he would pass. When the third time came, *p-r-r-t!* It was like the flight of a flock of partridges. There were howls, cat-cries; aprons, caps, and hats began to disappear, while behind them clubs proceeded to belabor on every side. Ah! no! there is no play on the stage that could ever give you such emotions as those. It was food for seven days' talk, when we related all this to the others who had not seen it; and how proud they were who could say, —

"I heard the third reading!"

It must be said, however, that for the sake of the fun one often risked losing some of his hide. Just imagine! One day — it was at Pointe Saint-Eustache — I don't know how the *commissaire* had reckoned, but no sooner was the second reading disposed of than the constables set to work, clubs in the air. I did not remain in waiting for them very long, you may believe. But all in vain I stretched my small legs to the utmost; one of those big devils fell upon me, and went for me at

such very short notice that after I had felt his stick whiz about me two or three times, he ended by giving it to me straight upon the head. Lord! what a whack! I had never seen so many stars in my life before. They brought me home with a broken head. But if you think that made me mend my ways — ah well! hardly; all the time poor Mamma Bélisaire was making compresses for me, I never once ceased exclaiming, —

"It isn't my fault. It is that rascally *commissaire*, who played a trick upon all of us. He read the Riot Act only twice!"

A FIRST-NIGHT PERFORMANCE.

IMPRESSIONS OF THE AUTHOR.

IT was to begin at eight. In five minutes the curtain would rise. Stage-carpenters, manager, and property-man, every one was at his post. The actors in the first scene had placed themselves, and taken appropriate attitudes. I peeped for one last time through the gap of the curtain. The house was crowded, — fifteen hundred heads, one row rising above another; the lights fell upon a smiling and animated audience. I recognized a few faces in it, but only vaguely; their physiognomies seemed to me quite changed. Their faces wore a quizzical expression, their manner was arrogant, dogmatic, and already I could see lorgnettes aimed in my direction like pistols. In one part of the house I did discern a few dear faces, grown pale with anxiety and expectation; but how many were purely indifferent, and even unfavorably disposed!

And all that these people brought with them from the outer world, all their recklessness, preoccupation, listlessness, and mistrust, must be dispelled; that atmosphere of ennui and disaffection must be penetrated, — a common idea move all these human beings; my drama, to live, must draw its inspiration from those inexorable eyes. I would have

delayed, prevented the curtain from rising, but no! it is too late now. I hear the three taps of the stick, a prelude from the orchestra, and then there is a deep silence. From the wings comes a voice which sounds hollow and far away, lost in the immensity of the house. My play has begun. Ah, wretched one! what have I done?

An awful moment! I know not where to turn, or what will become of me. Should one remain there, leaning against a gas-wing, ears strained to hear, and heart refusing to beat? — encourage the actors when he so greatly needs some encouragement himself? — talk, scarcely knowing what he is saying, and smile when the dazed look in his eyes betrays that his thought is far away? Confound it all, I would rather slip into the house somewhere, and stand face to face with danger!

Concealed in a box in the pit, I try to seem an indifferent spectator, quite apart from it all, and as if I had not seen the dust of those boards clinging to my play for the past two months, as if I myself had not decided upon every gesture, every least detail of the mounting of the piece, from the mechanism of entrances and exits even to the turning up of the gas. A singular feeling possesses me. I wish to listen, and yet cannot. I am uneasy, completely upset. I hear the quick turning of keys in the box-doors, the moving of stools, fits of contagious coughing, one voice answering another, — whispered conversations behind fans, the rustling of gowns, a multitude of insignificant sounds that seem of enormous dimensions to me; gestures and

attitudes that seem to show hostility, backs that appear to wear a discontented air, and sprawling elbows, intercept the entire scene.

In front of me a very young man wearing eyeglasses, who is taking notes with a grave air, observes, —

"It is puerile!"

In a box at my side a low voice is saying, —

"To-morrow, you remember."

"Is it to-morrow?"

"Yes, to-morrow without fail."

It would appear that great importance is attached to to-morrow in the minds of these people. I am thinking only of to-day. In the midst of all this confusion, not a point of my play tells, nothing makes the least impression. The voices of the actors, instead of rising, filling the house, are lost before they reach the footlights, fall with a dull sound into the prompter's box, amid an inane clapping of hands from the claque. What ails that gentleman who sits up aloft? What vexes him? I am really intimidated. I go out.

When I reach the street I find it is dark and rainy, but I scarcely perceive that. Boxes and galleries with luminous rows of heads are whirling before me, and in their midst one fixed and shining point, — the scene on the stage. This grows fainter as I get farther away from it. I walk on, in fruitless effort to pull myself together; I cannot efface that accursed scene, and the drama, which I know by heart, continues to play itself out, — drags on lugubriously in my brain. It is as though I

carried about with me some evil dream, with which mingle the people who jostle against me, and the slush and noise of the street. At the edge of the boulevard a sharp whistle stops me, and I grow pale. Imbecile! It is merely a whistle starting an omnibus. As I walk on, the rain increases. I imagine that in the theatre too it must be raining upon my drama, that its own weight has killed it, that it falls to pieces, and that my heroes, ashamed and worn out, are plodding after me along the wet sidewalks which glisten beneath the gaslight.

To dispel these gloomy ideas, I enter a café. I try to read, but the letters run together, dance, spread apart, and whirl. I cannot even tell what these words are trying to say; they seem bizarre, devoid of meaning. This reminds me of an incident of some years ago. It was at sea, the weather very stormy. I tried to read. Beneath a roof flooded with water, where I lay, I had found and tried to read an English grammar. There with the roar of the waves in my ears and the sound of the wrenching of masts, — to divert myself from danger, to avoid seeing those torrents of greenish water that fell upon the deck, pouring all over it, I devoted all my energies to the absorbing study of the English *th*. But vainly did I read aloud, repeat the words, shouting them almost; my brain was deafened with the howling of the sea, the sharp whistling of the blast through the yards.

The paper I am holding at this moment seems to me as incomprehensible as was my English grammar; however, perhaps because I have stared

so closely at the big sheet spread out before me, I seem to see printed in sharp, concise lines to-morrow's articles, and my own name discussed in phrases that stick like thorns, written with a pen dipped in gall. Suddenly the gas is turned down. The café is closing.

Is it time for that? What can be the hour?

The boulevards are full of people. The theatres are emptied. Doubtless I pass some who have seen my play. I would like to question them, know what they thought, but at the same time I pass on quickly, that I need not overhear reflections aloud, whole *feuilletons* in the streets. Ah! how happy are they who can return homeward with the consciousness that they have never written a play!

I stand before the theatre. It is closed. The lights are extinguished. Decidedly I shall gain no information to-night, but, as I look at the damp bill-boards and the great candelabra whose lights blink at the entrance, an intense sadness comes over me. That great building, which a while ago lent light and animation to all this part of the boulevard, is dull and lifeless now, gloomy, deserted, and dripping as though after a fire. Ah, well! At last it is over. Six long months of labor, of dreams, weariness alternating with hope, all they meant is lost, shrivelled, melted into nothingness in a single evening, under the glaring gaslight.

CHEESE-SOUP.

IT was a little chamber in the fifth story, one of those attics where the rain beats straight upon the skylight; at the present hour, when night has come, such rooms seem to be lost, roof and all, in gloom and storm. And yet this chamber is pleasant, cozy, and upon entering it, one feels an indescribable sensation of comfort, which the gusts of wind without, and the torrents of rain dripping from the gutters only increase. You might almost believe yourself to be in a warm nest at the top of some tall tree. For the moment the nest is empty; its occupant is not there, but you feel sure he will soon return. Everything within seems to await his coming. Upon a smothered fire a little soup-kettle is boiling tranquilly with a murmur of satisfaction. It keeps rather a late vigil, and although accustomed to that, judging by its sides browned through frequent contact with the flames, it becomes impatient now and then, and its cover rises, stirred by the steam; then a warm, appetizing whiff ascends, and permeates the whole chamber.

Oh! the delicious odor of cheese-soup!

At times too the fire clears itself of cinders, which come tumbling down through the logs, while a tiny flame darts out its tongue from beneath,

lighting the lower part of the room, as if making a tour of inspection to be assured that everything is in order. Ah, yes, order itself reigns there, and the master may return any moment he chooses. The Algerian curtains are drawn in front of the windows, and draped comfortably about the bed. There is the big arm-chair spreading itself at full length in front of the fire; the table stands in one corner, the cloth spread, dishes set for one solitary diner, the lamp ready to be lighted, and beside the plate is a book, the companion of that lonely repast. And not only is the soup-pot worn through frequent contact with the fire, but the flowers upon each dish are also faded, through repeated washings, and the book is worn at the edges. Age and long use have softened the appearance of all these well-worn things. One feels too that this lodger is obliged to return very late each evening, and that it pleases him, when he enters, to find that little supper simmering away, perfuming and warming the chamber to which he returns.

Oh! the savory odor of cheese-soup!

Observing the neatness of that bachelor apartment, I imagine that its tenant must be some employé, one of those beings whose devotion to the minutest details compels them to regulate all their living with the same punctuality with which they dispose of things official, and as methodically as they label each portfolio.

The extreme lateness of his return would seem to indicate that he is one of the night force in the postal or telegraph service. I fancy I see him,

to Maximus with a kindly and tender smile, as though already he saw those charming white threads which lengthen on the end of a spoon when cheese-soup, after simmering properly, is just cooked, and poured out piping-hot.

THE LAST BOOK.

"HE is dead!" some one said to me on the stairway.

For some days past I had been expecting this sad news. I knew that at any moment the tidings might greet me upon the threshold, and yet there was something of unexpectedness in the blow when it came. With heavy heart and trembling lips I entered the humble apartment of a man of letters. The room in which his work had been done was the most prominent of all, for the despotism of learning had monopolized whatever comfort or light the home possessed.

He lay there upon an iron bed — very low and small it was; his table was loaded with papers; his large handwriting cut short in the middle of the page, his pen still standing in his ink-bottle, told how suddenly death had smitten him. Behind the bed, a tall, oaken press, overflowing with papers and manuscripts, stood half open, almost at his head. About him on every side, books, — nothing but books; in every corner, on shelves, on chairs, on the desk, piled upon the floor, in corners, even to the foot of the bed. When he was writing, seated at his table, these piles of books, this litter upon which no dust had gathered, could please the eyes.

Alas! of these joys and disillusions the poor fellow received none from his last work. It was heart-rending to gaze at this lifeless head, drooping so heavily upon the pillow, asleep in death, while at his side was that book, so fresh and new, that book which would soon be seen in the shop-windows, form a part of the talk of the street, the life of the day, — whose title passers-by would read mechanically, carrying it away in the memory, impressed upon the retina, with the name of its author inscribed now upon that sadder leaf of the city's register — that name whose letter looked so bright, so gay on the cover, its color still fresh, unfaded. The entire problem of the soul and the body seemed to be there; that rigid corpse would so soon be given to earth and forgotten, while the book, starting forth on its life apart from him, like a visible soul, was full of vitality, and perhaps — a thing immortal.

"He promised me a first edition," I heard a lachrymose voice near me whisper. I looked around, and my glance met the keen eye of a gold-spectacled enthusiast. I was acquainted with him, and you also are, my friends who write. He was the bibliophile who knocks at your door as soon as your volume is announced, — two timid but persistent knocks that resemble himself. He enters smiling, bowing low, wriggling about you, and he addresses you as "dear master!" and does not depart without carrying away your last book. Merely the last! He has all the others. This only he still lacks. And how can one refuse him?

He arrives so opportunely, he knows just when to catch you, while you are still in the midst of that joy of which we were speaking, full of the abandon of the Envoy or the Dedication. Ah! that terrible little man, whom nothing rebuffs, neither heavy doors nor frozen greetings, neither wind, rain, nor distance. Of a morning you encounter him in the Rue de la Pompe, knocking at the low door of the Patriarch of Passy. At nightfall he returns from Marly with Sardou's latest drama under his arm. And so, forever upon the go, always in quest, he fills his hours, though he works not, fills his shelves, though he buys not.

Surely this passion for books must have been very strong in the man, to have brought him even to the bedside of the dead.

"Here is your copy — take it," I said impatiently. He not merely took it, he swallowed it up. Once the volume had quite disappeared in his pocket he remained there without budging, without speaking; his head leaning upon his elbow, he wiped his glasses with a softened air. What was he waiting for? What kept him there? Perhaps some passing feeling of shame, embarrassment at the thought of leaving so suddenly, as if he had merely come for the book?

Ah, no!

Upon the table, the wrapper half removed, he had perceived copies the book-lover prizes — their edges rough, uncut, wide margins, vignettes, and tailpieces. In spite of his meditative attitude, his

pensive absorption, all was revealed. The wretch had caught sight of them.

Oh, this mania for seeing things! Even I myself was distracted for a moment from my emotion. Through my tears I could not help following that painful bit of comedy played at the dead man's bedside. Slowly, with little invisible jerks, the book-lover approached the table. His hand, as if by chance, closed upon one of those volumes; he turned it about, opened it, fingered the leaves. By degrees his eye kindled, the blood mounted to his cheeks. The magic of the book operated upon him. At last he could no longer contain his emotion. He captured a copy. "It is for Monsieur de Sainte-Beuve," he said half audibly; and in his feverish anxiety and fear lest some one should take it from him, perhaps, too, to convince me that it was indeed intended for Monsieur de Sainte-Beuve, he added, very gravely, in a tone of indescribable compunction, "of the *Académie française!*" and disappeared.

HOUSE FOR SALE!

ABOVE the gate, a wooden gate, badly put together, and not preventing the sandy soil of the little garden from mingling with the earth of the road, a sign had hung for some time, scarcely stirred under the sun of summer, but twisted and shaken by every gale of autumn: *House for Sale!* And something seemed to say that it was a deserted house as well, so deep was the silence surrounding it.

And yet some one dwelt there. A tiny bluish ring of smoke ascending from the brick chimney which rose slightly above the wall, betrayed that an existence was in hiding here, — an existence as sad, as inobtrusive as the smoke of that meagre fire. Through the loose and rickety boards of that gate could be seen, not the abandon and emptiness, that indescribable something in the air which precedes and announces an auction sale and departure, but instead were trim walks, rounded arbors, water-cans near an artificial basin, and gardener's tools leaning against the side of the tiny house. It was merely a peasant's cottage built on an incline, propped by a tiny stairway, which placed the first story on the shady side, the ground-floor facing the south. On that side it looked like

a hothouse. There were bell-glasses piled up along the walks, empty flower-pots turned upside down; others, in rows and filled with geraniums and verbenas, stood in the warm, white sand. Except for the shade of three great plane trees, the garden basked in sunshine. A fruit-wall, and fruit trees with fan-shaped props of iron wire stood in the sunshine, somewhat robbed of their leafage, but merely for the sake of the fruit. There were strawberry-beds too, and peas well propped; in the midst of all these things, surrounded by order and calm, an old man in a straw hat went up and down through the walks all day long, watering his garden through the early hours of the day, pruning branches, and trimming borders.

The old man knew no one in the neighborhood. Except for the baker's wagon, which stopped at every door of the only street in the village, he never received a visit. Sometimes, in search of one of those lots of land half-way up the hill, always fruitful, and making such charming orchards, some passer-by would sight the sign, and pause to ring.

At first the house would remain deaf. At the second ring there was heard the sound of wooden shoes approaching slowly from the farthest end of the garden, and the old man opened the door halfway with a furious air.

"What do you want?"

"Is this house for sale?"

"Yes," answered the worthy man, with some

effort. "Yes, it is for sale, but I will tell you in advance that the price is very high;" and his hand was placed upon the door, ready to close it and obstruct all entrance. And his eyes compelled you to go away, they showed such anger; he remained there, guarding like a dragon his plots of vegetables and his little sand-yard. People passed on their way, asking themselves what maniac this might be with whom they had to deal, and what was meant by this folly of putting up that sign "For Sale," and showing such desire that his house should remain unsold.

The mystery was explained to me. One day as I passed the little house, I heard the sound of animated voices in eager discussion.

"It must be sold, papa, it must be sold. You promised."

And the tremulous voice of the old man was heard, —

"But, my children, I ask nothing better than to sell it. Look! Have I not put up a sign?"

I thus learned that these were his sons and his daughters-in-law, petty Parisian shopkeepers, who were compelling him to dispose of this well-loved spot. For what reason? I do not know. But one thing was certain: they had begun to find that matters were moving too slowly; and from that day they appeared regularly every Sunday to harass the unfortunate man, and oblige him to keep his promise. In that deep Sabbath stillness, when even the earth itself rests after sowing and laboring all week long, I could hear those voices very

plainly from the road. The shopkeepers were talking, arguing among themselves, as they played *tonneau*, and that word "money," spoken by those sharp voices, had all the hard metallic sound of the quoits they were tossing. In the evening they would all depart again, and after the old man had reconducted them along the road for a few steps he returned quickly, and gladly closed his big gate, with another week of respite before him. For seven days' space the house was silent again. In the little sun-baked garden nothing could be heard but the sound of sand crushed under a heavy foot, and the dragging of a rake.

But as weeks went on the old man was tormented and pressed more and more. The shopkeepers employed every means. Little children were brought there to seduce him.

"Don't you see, grandpapa? when the house is sold you shall live with us! We shall all be so happy together." And there were whispered asides in every corner, endless promenades along the walks, calculations made in a loud voice. On one occasion I heard one of the daughters exclaim, —

"The shanty is not worth a hundred sous. It is only fit to be torn down."

The old man listened silently. They talked of him as though he were already dead, of his house as if it were already demolished. He walked about, his body bent, his eyes full of tears, through force of habit feeling for a branch he might prune, a fruit he might care for, in passing, and it was

evident that his life was so firmly rooted in this little spot of earth that he had not strength to tear himself away from it. And, indeed, no matter what was said to him, he always contrived to put off the moment of departure. In summer, with the ripening of those slightly acid fruits which exhale the freshness of the season, as the cherries and the currants black and red ripened, he said, —

"We must wait till after they have been gathered. I will sell it immediately after that."

But after the gathering, when the cherry season had gone by, came the peaches, then the grapes, and after the grapes those beautiful brown medlars which may be gathered almost up to the time of the first snow-fall. Then winter arrived. The country was dismal then, the garden had nothing left in it. No passers-by, no purchasers. The shopkeepers themselves no longer appeared of a Sunday. Three long months of rest in which to prepare for the sowing, to prune the fruit trees while that useless sign rocked back and forth upon the road, swayed by wind and rain.

At length, grown impatient, and persuaded that the old man was striving to drive away every purchaser, his children took a decided step. One of the daughters-in-law proceeded to install herself in the house, — a little shopwoman, finely arrayed from early morning, comely in appearance, and possessing that artificial sweetness, that obsequious amiability cultivated by people accustomed to a commercial life. The very highway seemed to belong to her. She opened the gate

wide, talked loudly, smiling at every passer-by if to say, —

"Come in. Don't you see that the house is sale?"

No more respite for the poor old man. times he would endeavor to forget her presen dig his garden-plots, and sow them once mc as a man who stands in the presence of dea and loves to delude even his fears by devisi new plans. But all the time the shopwoman f lowed him about, tormenting him: "Bah! wh good is that? — You are taking all this troul for others!"

He never replied to her, but continued his wo with a singular obstinacy. Had he let his gard alone, he would have felt that already it was part lost to him, that he must begin to wean himse from it; therefore he did not permit a single bla of grass in the walks, or a single gourmand amor his rose bushes.

Meanwhile purchasers did not present ther selves. The war was in progress, and all in va did the woman keep that gate wide open, ar make eyes affably at the road. She saw loads c furniture moved away, nothing more. Only du entered at the gate. From day to day the womar temper grew more sour. Her business in Par needed her presence. I heard her heap reproach upon her father-in-law, make genuine scenes wi him, slamming the doors. The old man bent h back and said nothing, but consoled himself wi watching his little peas beginning to climb, ar

with seeing always in the same place that sign, *House for Sale!*

That year, when I arrived in the country, I recognized the house, but alas! the sign was no longer there. Torn, mouldy placards still hung along the walls, but all was over! The house had been sold. Instead of the great gray entrance was a green gate, freshly painted, with a swelling fronton, and a small grated opening through which one could peep into the garden. It was no longer the fruit-orchard of other days, but a bourgeois heap of flower-beds, of lawns and cascades, and everything was reflected in a huge metal ball which swayed back and forth in front of the steps. Reflected in this ball the walks were seen bordered with gaudy flower-beds, and two figures whose size was even exaggerated; one was a big, red-faced man, dripping with perspiration, and buried in a rustic chair; the other was an enormous woman, who cried, quite out of breath, as she brandished a watering-pot, —

"I have put fourteen canfuls upon the balsams!"

They had built for themselves, renovated the palisades, and in this little house, completely remodelled and still smelling of paint, a piano was playing familiar quadrilles and polkas and dance-hall airs at full speed. This dance-music, which could be heard out on the road, making one warm to listen, the thick dust of that July day, the vulgar display of big flowers and fat women, this excessive and trivial gayety rent my heart. I was thinking of the poor old man who used to walk

there, so happy and peaceful. I pictured him in Paris, his straw hat upon his head; I seemed to see the bent shoulders of the old gardener as he wandered about in the middle of some back shop, weary, timid, tearful, while his daughter-in-law, the triumphant owner of a new counter, jingled the money the little house had brought.

YULE-TIDE STORIES.

I.

A CHRISTMAS-EVE REVEL IN THE MARAIS.

M. MAJESTÉ, manufacturer of seltzer-water in the Marais, has been celebrating Christmas-eve with a little party of friends in the Place Royale, and now is returning homeward, humming a tune to himself. Saint Paul strikes two. "How late it is!" says the good man, and he hastens. But the pavement is slippery, the streets dark, and, besides, in that infernal old quarter, which dates from the days when vehicles were rare, there are so many windings, corners, and spur-stones in front of the gates for the convenience of horsemen, that all these things prevent a man from making speed, especially when his legs are a little heavy, and his eyes somewhat dimmed, after all the toasts of the evening. However, M. Majesté reaches home at last. He pauses before a tall, decorated portal where a scutcheon lately gilded, gleams in the light of the moon; the ancient armorial bearings have been re-painted, and now serve as the sign of his manufacturing establishment, —

FORMER HÔTEL DE NESMOND.
MAJESTÉ JUNIOR,
MANUFACTURER OF SELTZER-WATER.

Upon all the siphons of the factory, on bill-heads and letter-heads also, are displayed the ancient, resplendent arms of Nesmond.

The portal passed, the courtyard is entered; it is large, bright, and airy, and in the day-time, when its entrance is opened, all the street is lighted by it. At the farther end is a great building, very ancient, the dark walls carved and decorated, swelling balconies of iron, stone balconies with pilasters, immense, lofty windows, surmounted with frontons, their capitals rising even to the top story; there was roof within roof, and, crowning all, dormer windows looked out from masses of slate, each encircled with garlands like a mirror. There was also a great stone stairway, corroded from many a rain; a poor lean vine clung to the walls, as black as the cord hanging from the pulley in the loft; an indescribable air of sadness and decay clung to everything. This was the ancient Hôtel de Nesmond. By day the aspect of the place was different. The words "*Office, Shop, Workman's Entrance,*" standing in gilded letters upon the old walls, make them look alive and modern. Teams from the railway stations pass and shake the portal. Clerks come to the stone steps, each with pen behind his ear, and ready to receive merchandise. The courtyard is loaded with cases, baskets, straw, and packing-cloth. It is easily perceived that this is a factory. But in the deep silence of the night, when the wintry moonlight darts through that mass of complicated roofs, its light interwoven with shadows, the ancient house of the Nesmonds

assumes once more its seigniorial aspect. The carving of the balconies looks like lace-work, the court of honor seems larger than before, and the old staircase, unequally lighted, has nooks which remind you of dim cathedral corners, empty niches and hidden steps like those of an altar.

And on this special evening M. Majesté finds that his house presents a singular appearance. As he crosses the deserted courtyard the sound of his footsteps impresses him. The staircase seems immense to him, and difficult to climb. No doubt the festivities of the evening have something to do with this. Arrived at the first story he stops to regain breath, and approaches a window. Ah! see what it is to inhabit an historic house. Monsieur Majesté is not poetical, no, indeed! and yet, as he looks upon that beautiful, aristocratic courtyard, where the moon spreads a veil of blue light, as he looks at this venerable place, once a nobleman's residence and now appearing as if asleep, its roofs benumbed beneath their hood of snow, thoughts of the other world come to him.

"Well, now! what if the Nesmonds returned?"

At this moment a loud ringing of bells reaches his ears; the folding-doors at the entrance of the house open so quickly and brusquely that the street-lamp is extinguished, and for some moments there is heard below, in the doorway wrapped in shadow, an indistinct sound, the sound of voices whispering, that mingle with a rustling noise. They dispute, press forward, hasten to enter. Lackeys, innumerable lackeys are there, coaches

with plate-glass doors and windows gleam in the moonlight, sedan-chairs move to and fro, a torch on each side flaming up as the current of air from the portal strikes them. In no time the courtyard is full of people. But at the foot of the stone steps the confusion ceases. People are seen descending from their carriages, bowing to each other; they enter, talking together as if they are acquainted with the house. There is a rustling of silk on the steps, a clatter of swords. Only white heads are seen, locks so heavily powdered that they look dull and dead; all these voices are thin and clear, and slightly tremulous; their tiny peals of laughter are hollow, without volume; their footsteps scarcely seem to touch the ground. All these men and women appear to be old, very old. Their eyes are sunken; their jewels have no glow of fire; the ancient silks they wear shimmer softly with changing tints which gleam faintly beneath the light from the torches; and above all this splendor floats a little cloud of powder, which rises from all these heads with coiffures piled up high and rolled into little ringlets; at each of their charming courtesies, somewhat stiff because of swords and big panniers, that tiny cloud rises. Soon the entire house appears to be haunted. Torches gleam from window to window, go up and down along the winding stairs, and are seen even in the dormer windows of the roof, which catch a gleam of all this animation and merry-making. The entire Hôtel de Nesmond is illumined as if a bright ray from the setting sun had kindled its windows.

"People are seen descending from their carriages, bowing to each other"

"Ah, *mon Dieu!* they will set the house afire!" said Monsieur Majesté. And, awakened from his stupor, he tries to shake the numbness out of his legs, and descends quickly into the courtyard, where the lackeys have just lighted a big, bright fire. M. Majesté approaches and speaks to them. The lackeys do not answer him, but continue to talk in a whisper among themselves; yet, as they talk, not the slightest vapor escapes from their lips into the glacial darkness of the night. Monsieur Majesté is not very well pleased, but one thing reassures him. That great fire which leaps straight into the air to such a height is a most singular fire, a flame without warmth, a fire which is bright, but does not burn. His mind set at rest on that score, the good man climbs the steps, and enters his store-rooms.

These store-rooms on the ground-floor were in former days magnificent reception-rooms. Bits of tarnished gold still glitter at every corner. Mythological figures circle about the ceiling, surround the mirrors, float above the doors in vague tints somewhat dimmed, like the memories of by-gone years. Unfortunately there are no curtains, no furniture left. Only baskets and big packing-cases full of siphons with pewter heads; behind the windows the blackened, withered branches of an old lilac tree rise. When M. Majesté enters, he finds his store-room lighted and full of people. He salutes them, but no one pays the slightest attention to him. The women, each leaning on the arm of her cavalier, continue to rustle their satin pel-

isses as they make little, mincing, ceremonious gestures. They promenade, talk, and disperse. Verily, all these ancient marquises seem to find themselves quite at home. Before a painted pier-glass one tiny apparition pauses, all of a tremble, and whispers, "To think that this is I! — just look at me!" and she glances with a smile towards a Diana who is seen in the wainscoting, slender, rose-tinted, a crescent upon her forehead.

"Nesmond! come here and look at your coat of arms!" and every one laughs to see the Nesmond arms blazoned upon a packing-cloth, and the name of Majesté underneath. "Ha, ha, ha! — *Majesté!* What! have their Majesties still a corner in France?"

And endless gayety greets this discovery, tiny, flute-like peals of laughter, fingers tossed in the air, and fantastic grimaces.

Suddenly some one exclaims, —

"Champagne, champagne!"

"But — it cannot be."

"But — it is."

"Yes, yes, it is champagne! Come, Countess, quick! a little for the sake of Christmas-eve!"

It is M. Majesté's seltzer-water they have mistaken for champagne. They find it slightly flat, but — bah! they drink it just the same, and as these poor little ghosts are somewhat light-headed, by degrees that foaming seltzer animates, excites them, and fills them with a longing to dance. Minuets are formed.

Four fine violins Nesmond has summoned com-

mence an air of Rameau's, all in triolets; its quick, short steps have a melancholy ring in spite of the vivacity of the rhythm. It was delightful to see all these charming old couples turn about slowly, saluting each other to the measure of that solemn music. The very garments of the dancers seemed to renew their youth, even those golden waistcoats, brocaded coats, and diamond-buckled shoes; the walls themselves seemed alive as they listened to those ancient airs. The old mirror, confined in the wall for two hundred years, scratched and blackened at the corners, recognized them also, and reflected the image of each dancer, — a reflection slightly dimmed, as if with the tender emotion of a regret. In the midst of all this elegance, M. Majesté feels uneasy. He squats behind a packing-box, and watches them. By slow degrees day arrives. Through the glass doors of the storeroom he sees the courtyard grow lighter; then the light begins to come through the top of the windows, and at last one whole side of the room is lighted. As the light grows brighter, the figures fade, and become indistinct. After a while, M. Majesté can see only two small violins lingering in a corner, and as the daylight touches them, they, too, vanish. In the courtyard he can still perceive, but vaguely, the shape of a sedan-chair, a powdered head sown with emeralds, and the last spark from a torch which the lackeys have thrown on the pavement, mingling with the sparks from the wheels of a wagon which passes heavily through the portal, rumbling as it enters.

II.

THE THREE LOW MASSES.

I.

"Two truffled turkeys, Garrigou?"

"Yes, *révérend*, two magnificent turkeys, stuffed with truffles. I should know something about them, for I myself helped to fill them. It seemed as if their skin must crack in roasting, they were so well-filled."

"*Jésus-Maria!* How I love truffles. Quick, Garrigou! bring me my surplice. And with the turkeys, did you see aught else in the kitchen?"

"Oh, all sorts of good things. Since noon we did nothing but pluck pheasants, hoopoes, pullets, and grouse; feathers were flying in every direction; then from the fish-pond were brought eels and golden carp, trout and —"

"How large were those trout, Garrigou?"

"As large as *that*, reverend father, enormous!"

"*Dieu!* methinks I see them at this moment. Have you filled the flagons with wine?"

"Yes, *révérend*, I have filled them with wine, but indeed it is no such wine as that you will drink immediately the midnight mass is over. If you could see all that is in the dining-hall of the castle, the decanters flaming with wine of all colors, and the silver plates, the carved épergnes, the flowers,

the candelabra! Never again will the world see the like! Monsieur le Marquis has invited all the lords of the neighborhood. There will be at least forty of you at table, without counting either the bailiff or the notary. Ah! you are fortunate indeed to be one of them, *révérend.* I merely caught a whiff of those fine turkeys, and the odor of the truffles follows me everywhere. *Meuh!*"

"Come, come, my son. Let us beware of the sin of gluttony, especially upon the Eve of the Nativity. Make haste to light the candles upon the altar, and ring the first bell for mass; for the hour of midnight approaches, and we must not be late."

This conversation took place in the Christmas-season of the year of grace one thousand six hundred — and it matters not how many years beside — between the Révérend Dom Balaguère, ancient prior of the Order of Barnabas, at that time chaplain of the Sires of Trinquelague, and his petty-clerk, Garrigou, or to be more exact, him whom the prior believed to be his clerk Garrigou; for you will see that the Evil One, on that evening, had assumed the round face and undecided features of the young sacristan, that he might the more easily lead the reverend father into temptation and force him to commit the frightful sin of gluttony. The self-styled Garrigou (*hum! hum!*) began to ring the bells of the seigniorial chapel with all his might; the reverend father at last invested himself with his chasuble in the small sacristy of the castle. But, his spirit already somewhat disturbed by all those gastro-

nomic descriptions, he repeated to himself while donning his vestments, —

"Roast turkeys, golden carps, and trouts as big as *that!*" Without, the night-wind blew, scattering the music of the bells, and one after another, lights began to appear along the sides of Mont Ventoux, close to whose summit rose the ancient towers of Trinquelague. The neighboring farmers were going to midnight mass in the castle. They climbed the hill in groups of five and six, singing as they went, the father leading, a lantern in his hands, the women wrapped in their great brown cloaks, in which their children too cuddled, and sought shelter. In spite of the lateness of the hour and the coldness of the night, all these good people walked briskly, sustained by the one thought that after mass was done there would be, as had always been the yearly custom, a table spread for them in the kitchens below. From time to time, upon the rude ascent, some nobleman's carriage, preceded by torch-bearers, was sighted, the glass gleaming in the moonlight; or a mule would be seen trotting past, jingling its bells, and by the light of torches enveloped in vapor, the farmers recognized their bailiff, and saluted him as he passed by.

"Good-evening, good-evening, Master Arnoton."

"Good-evening, good-evening, my children."

The night was clear, the stars sparkled frostily, the wind nipped keenly, and the fine sleet which clung to garments without wetting them, preserved former traditions of a Christmas white with snow. Above, on the hill, loomed the castle, their visible

goal, an enormous pile, with towers and gables, with the belfry of the chapel rising into the dark blue sky, and a host of tiny lights flashing, moving to and fro, waving at every window, and appearing not unlike sparks from a charred mass of paper, when seen against the sombre background of the building. The drawbridge and the postern passed, the chapel must be entered by crossing the outer courtyard, full of coaches, lackeys, and sedan-chairs, brightly lighted by the torch-fires and the blaze from the kitchens; various sounds were heard, the jingling of spits as they turned, the clatter of saucepans, the clinking of glasses, and silver moved about in preparing the repast. There was wafted upward a warm vapor which smelt so deliciously of roast meat, of the savory herbs used for sauces formed of various compounds, that the farmers, the chaplain, the bailiff, and every one else observed:

"What a feast there will be after mass is over!"

II.

TING-A-LING! Ting-a-ling-a-ling!

The midnight mass has begun. In the chapel of the castle, a miniature cathedral, with its vaulted roof and oaken wainscoting reaching to the ceiling, all the tapestries have been hung, all the tapers lighted. And what an illustrious assemblage! what toilets! Chief and first of all, in the sculptured stall which surrounds the chancel, sits the Sire de Trinquelague, arrayed in salmon-colored

taffeta, and about him all the noble lords who are his invited guests. Opposite, upon a velvet prie-Dieu, the dowager marchioness takes her place, robed in flame-colored brocade, and at her side the youthful Lady of Trinquelague, with a high lace head-dress, gauffered according to the latest fashion at the French court. Farther down sat two men clothed in black, with big pointed perruques and smooth-shaven faces. These were the bailiff, master Thomas Arnoton, and the petty-notary, master Ambroy, two dark notes in that bright-hued harmony of silks and figured damask. Below them sat fat major-domos, pages, huntsmen, stewards, and Dame Barbe herself, all her keys hanging at her side upon a fine silver ring. At the very end of the chapel, upon the benches, sat the lower servants and the farmers with their families; and, last of all, quite close to the door, which they opened and closed discreetly, came the lords of the kitchen, the scullions themselves, slipping out between the making of two sauces to catch what they could of the mass, bringing a whiff of the supper into the church, which wore a festive air, and was quite warm from the blaze of so many tapers. Was it the sight of those little white caps that so distracted the celebrant? More likely it was that bell of Garrigou's, that mad little bell, which tinkled at the foot of the altar with such infernal speed, and seemed to say every second: "We must hasten, hasten! The sooner we are through with this, the sooner we shall be seated at table." For it is a fact that every time that wicked little bell rang,

the chaplain forgot the mass and thought only of the supper. He fancied he saw those bustling kitchens, the fires burning like those of a forge, the warm vapor rising when a pot-lid was uncovered, and in that vapor two magnificent turkeys, stuffed, distended, and mottled with truffles. And he seemed to see long rows of little pages pass, carrying big platters from which arose a tempting steam, and with them he entered the great hall prepared for the feast. Oh, how delicious! There stands an immense table, gleaming with lights, laden with good things, peacocks dressed with their feathers, pheasants spreading their golden-brown wings, decanters the color of rubies, pyramids of fruit, shining amid green branches, and those marvellous fishes of which Garrigou had made mention (ah! was it Garrigou?) lying upon a bed of fennel, their scales as pearly as if they had just come out of the water, and a bunch of odorous herbs in the monsters' nostrils. So vivid is the vision of these marvellous things that it seems to Dom Balaguère as if all those wonderful platters were placed before him upon the embroidered altar-cloth; and two or three times instead of the *Dominus Vobiscum* he finds himself almost repeating the *Benedicite.* Except for these slight mistakes, the worthy man gets through the service very conscientiously, without skipping a line, or omitting a single genuflection; all goes very well, and the end of the first mass is reached, for you remember that on Christmas-eve the same celebrant must say three consecutive masses.

"One is finished," whispered the chaplain with a sigh of relief, and then, without losing a moment he motions to his clerk, the person he supposed to be his clerk, and —

Ting-a-ling! Ling-a-ling-a-ling!

The second mass is beginning, and with it the sin of Dom Balaguère. "Quick, quick, let us hasten," cries Garrigou's bell, with its little shrill voice; and this time the wretched officiant, succumbing completely to the demon of gluttony, plunges into his missal, and devours its pages with all the avidity of his over-excited appetite. He bows frenetically, rises again, hurriedly makes the sign of the cross, the necessary genuflections, and curtails all his gestures that he may finish the sooner. He scarcely extends his arm when he reaches the Gospel, nor beats his breast at the Confiteor. There is a race between himself and his clerk to see which one can go the fastest. Verses and responses rush headlong, tumbling over each other in their haste. Words are half pronounced through closed lips to save time, and nothing is heard save incomprehensible murmurs: —

"*Oremus ps . . . ps . . . ps . . .*"

"*Mea culpâ . . . pâ . . . pâ . . .*"

Like vintagers hastily crushing the contents of the vat, both of them plunge through the Latin of the mass, splashing fragments of it in every direction.

"*Dom . . . scum!*" says Balaguère.

"*Stutuo!*" Garrigou responds: and all the time

that accursed little bell is there, tinkling in their ears like the little round bells hung about post-horses to spur them to a gallop. You can easily imagine that with that sound jingling in the ears, a low mass is celebrated with all possible expedition.

"Two!" says the chaplain, panting, and without taking time to regain his breath, red in the face and dripping with perspiration, he tumbles over the altar-steps, and — Ting-a-ling! Ling-a-ling-a-ling! The third mass begins. It is only the work of a few moments now, and then the dining-hall! But, alas! as the moment of the feast approaches, the unfortunate Balaguère is possessed by a perfect frenzy of impatience and gluttonous longing. The vision becomes more clearly defined, the golden carps and roast turkeys seem to be there, in that very spot! He touches them, he — oh! *Dieu!* the platters are steaming, the fragrance of the wines ascends, and that little bell cries out as if mad, —

"Quicker, quicker, quicker!"

But how is it possible to go more quickly? His lips scarcely move. He no longer pronounces a word. Unless he should cheat the good Lord completely and rob Him of His mass? — and that is what the wretched man does. Yielding to one temptation after another, he begins by omitting a verse, then two more. The Epistle is too long, he does not end it; he merely skims the Gospel, omits the Credo, skips the Pater Noster, salutes the *Préface* at a distance, and with spasmodic jumps rushes

into eternal damnation, followed in each movement by the infamous Garrigou (*vade retro, Satanas*); the latter seconds his efforts with marvellous understanding, relieves him of his chasuble, turns over the leaves, two at a time, upsets the reading-desk, overturns the flagons, and rings that bell incessantly, ever more and more loudly and rapidly.

The terror depicted on the faces of all that congregation cannot be described! Compelled to follow the pantomime of the priest, in that mass of which they understood not a word, some rose whilst others knelt, some were seated whilst others remained standing, and the various phases of this singular celebration resulted, upon the benches, in absolute confusion, in a multitude of diverse attitudes. The Star of Bethlehem, in its course among the paths of heaven, moving towards the lowly manger, paled with fright as it beheld this shameful sight.

"The abbé goes too fast. One cannot follow him," murmurs the aged dowager, with a bewildered shake of her head-dress. Master Arnoton, his huge steel-rimmed spectacles astride his nose, fumbles in his prayer-book, seeking to discover where the deuce they are. But at heart all these good people, who are also anticipating the midnight feast, are not at all sorry that the mass proceeds at such break-neck speed; and when Dom Balaguère turns with radiant face towards his flock, crying with all his strength, "*Ite, missa est,*" all within the chapel answer, as with one voice, and

with a *Deo gratias* so overjoyed, so full of enthusiasm, that one might well believe himself seated already at table, and responding to the first toast of the Christmas-eve feast.

III.

FIVE minutes later that assemblage of noblemen were seated in the great hall, the chaplain in their midst. The castle, brilliantly lighted throughout, re-echoed with songs, cries, laughter, and uproar; the venerable Dom Balaguère planted his fork in the wing of a grouse, drowning remorse for his sin in draughts of good *vin du pape*, and fine meat-gravies. He ate and drank so much, this poor holy man, that he died during the night, after a terrible attack, and without having a single moment given him for repentance. When on the morrow he arrived in heaven, which was still ringing with rumors of the feasting of the preceding night, I leave you to imagine what was his reception.

"Depart from my sight, thou faithless Christian," said the sovereign Judge and Master of us all, "for thy sin is so great that it blots out the memory of a whole life of virtue. Ah! thou hast robbed me of a midnight mass. Even so! thou shalt atone for this with three hundred masses in its stead, and into Paradise thou shalt not enter till thou hast celebrated within thine own chapel, and on Christmas-eve, three hundred masses, which shall be in

the presence of all those who have sinned with thee and because of thy sin."

And that is the true legend of Dom Balaguère as it is told to this day in the land of olives. The castle of Trinquelague exists no longer now, but the chapel still rises erect as ever, by the summit of Mont Ventoux, amid a thicket of green oaks. The wind beats against its disjointed door, grass grows upon the threshold, birds nest about its altar and in the embrasures of its lofty windows whose colored panes disappeared long ago. And yet it seems that every year, as often as Christmas-eve returns, an unearthly light wanders among those ruins, and on their way to mass or to some Christmas-eve merrymaking, the country-folk see that spectral chapel illumined with invisible tapers, which burn in the open air and cannot be quenched even by the snow or the wind. You may smile at this if you wish, but a vine-dresser of the neighborhood, one Garrigue by name, and without doubt a descendant of Garrigou, assured me that one Christmas-eve, being a little light-headed after the revel of the evening, he was lost upon the mountain near Trinquelague, and this is what happened: up to one o'clock he saw nothing. All was silent, wrapped in darkness, inanimate. Suddenly, towards midnight, bells began to chime in the belfry above; it was an old, old carillon, that sounded as if ten leagues distant. Very soon, upon the ascent of the road, Garrigue saw torches flickering, waving to and fro, and borne by indistinct shadowy forms. Beneath

the chapel-porch footsteps were heard, and voices whispered, —

"Good-evening, Master Arnoton."

"Good-evening, good-evening, my children."

When all had entered, my vine-dresser, being very brave, approached with soft steps, and beheld through the broken door a singular spectacle. All the forms he had seen pass were arranged about the choir, in the ruined nave, as if the ancient benches still existed. Fair ladies in brocade, and lace-covered coifs, noble lords, embroidered from head to foot, peasants in flowered coats such as our grandsires wore were there, and all looked old, faded, dust-stained, and weary. From time to time night-birds, the habitual guests of the chapel, awakened by all the lights, hovered about these candles, whose flame ascended straight towards heaven, but seemed indistinct as if seen burning through a film; what amused Garrigue vastly was a certain personage with great steel-rimmed spectacles, who shook his high black perruque from time to time, — one of those birds clinging to it firmly, and flapping its wings noiselessly.

In the farther end of the chapel was a little old man, of infantile appearance, on his knees in the midst of the choir and shaking desperately a little mute, tongueless bell, while a priest, robed in faded gold-cloth, went back and forth before the altar, reciting orisons of which none heard a single word. Surely this was Dom Balaguère, reciting his third low mass.

THE POPE IS DEAD.

My childhood was passed in a large provincial town which is bisected by a river crowded with crafts, and full of stir and bustle; there I acquired while still young a fondness for voyages, and the passion for a nautical life. There is one especial corner of the quay, near a certain footbridge, Saint Vincent, it is called, and I never think of it, even to-day, without emotion. I remember that sign nailed to the end of a yard, "*Cornet, boats to let*," the little staircase which went down even to the water, slippery and black from frequent wettings, the flotilla of little boats, freshly painted with gay colors, standing in a row at the foot of the ladder, rocking gently side by side, as if the charming names which decorated the stern in white letters, "*The Flamingo-bird*," "*The Swallow*," really lent the boats themselves new buoyancy.

Long oars glistening with white paint were drying against the wall, and among them walked Father Cornet with his paint-pot and big paint-brushes; his face was tanned, furrowed, and wrinkled with innumerable tiny depressions, like the river itself when an evening breeze springs up. Oh! Father Cornet! That worthy man was the keeper of my childhood, my joy and sorrow combined, my sin.

my remorse. How many crimes he led me to commit with those boats of his! I played truant from school, I sold my books. What would I not have sold for an afternoon's boating!

All my exercise-books at the bottom of the boat, my jacket off, my hat pushed back, a delicious breeze from the water fanning my hair, I pulled the oars firmly, my brows knitted in a frown, trying to cultivate the air of an old sea-dog. As long as I was in the town I kept to the middle of the river, at equal distance from either bank, where the old sea-dog might have been recognized! What a sense of triumph I felt, mingling with the movement of boats and rafts and floats loaded with wood, steamboats moving side by side, but never touching each other, though separated merely by a slender strip of foam! And then there were heavier boats which had to turn about to follow the current, while a host of smaller ones were obliged to move out of their way.

Suddenly the wheels of a steamboat would begin to churn the water around me; a huge shadow would loom above me; it was the bow of a boat loaded with apples. "Look out, youngster," a hoarse voice shouted; dripping with perspiration I tugged away, entangled in that current of life upon the river which mingled incessantly with the life of the street at every bridge and foot-bridge, while reflections from passing omnibuses darkened the water as I pulled my oars.

The current of the river was very strong about the arches of the bridge, and there were such

eddies, such whirlpools, among them that famous one to which the name of "*Death the Deceiver*" had been given. You can understand that it was no light matter for a child to pilot himself through that part of the river, pulling with the arms of a twelve-year-old, and no one to hold the rudder.

Sometimes I chanced to encounter the chain. As quickly as possible I would catch on to the end of the line of boats as it was tugged along, and letting my oars lie motionless, spread like wings about to alight, I allowed myself to be borne onward by that swift, silent movement which broke the river's surface into long ribbons of foam, while the trees along the bank and the houses upon the quay glided by us. A long, long distance ahead I could hear the monotonous turning of the screw, and on one of the boats, where a tiny thread of smoke was rising from a low chimney, I could hear a dog's bark; at such times I really fancied that I was aboard ship, and off for a long cruise.

Unfortunately, those meetings with that line of boats were rare. Most of the time I rowed and rowed, through the hours when the sun was hottest. Oh, that noonday sun beating straight down upon the river; I can still seem to feel it burning me! Everything glistened beneath those fiery rays. In that dazzling, sonorous atmosphere, which rested, a floating mass, above the waves vibrating with their every movement, with every dip of my oars, and from the fisherman's lines raised, dripping, from the water, I could see vivid gleams, as from some surface of polished silver. Then I would

close my eyes while I rowed on. From the energy of my efforts and the bound of the waves beneath my boat, I thought for the moment that I must be moving very rapidly, but upon raising my head to look, I was sure to see the same tree, the same wall facing me from the river-bank.

At last, completely exhausted, covered with perspiration, crimson with heat, I succeeded in leaving the city behind me. The din that came from bath-houses, washerwomen's boats, and boat-landings, grew fainter; the bridges were farther apart upon the widening river. A few suburban gardens and a factory chimney were reflected here and there. On the horizon the fringe of verdant islands fluttered, and now, unable to go any farther, I would pull close to the bank; there, in the midst of the reeds, full of buzzing life, overcome with the sun, fatigue, and that oppressive heat which rose from the water dotted with great yellow flowers, the old sea-dog would have an attack of the nose-bleed, which lasted for hours. My voyages always ended with that catastrophe; but then — one must not ask too much! Delightful enough these excursions were to me.

But the terrible part was the return, the moment when I must enter the house. No matter how fast I pulled the oars as I rowed homeward, I always arrived too late, and long after school was out. Impressed with the decline of day, the sight of the first few gaslights twinkling through the mist, the Soldiers' Retreat, my apprehension and remorse grew ever greater as I neared home. I envied the

people I met, tranquilly turning homeward. My head dull and heavy, full of the effects of sun and water, a murmur of sea-shells in my ears, I ran on, my face already reddening with the lie I was about to tell.

For on each occasion it was necessary to confront that terrible "Where were you?" which awaited me upon the threshold. It was that question which terrified me most, upon my home-coming. Standing upon the stairs I must answer upon the spur of the moment, and always have a story ready, something to say so astounding, so overwhelming, that surprise must cut short all further questioning. This left me time to enter, to regain breath. And for the sake of that moment I counted no cost too dear. I invented sinister events, revolutions, terrible things; one whole side of the city was burning, the railway bridge had collapsed, and fallen into the river! But the most startling of all my inventions was the following:

That evening I reached home very late. My mother, who had awaited me a whole hour, was on the watch, standing at the head of the stairway.

"Where have you been?" she exclaimed.

Tell me who can from what source children obtain the impish ideas that enter their heads. I had prepared no excuse, discovered none, — for I had returned too quickly. Suddenly a wild thought occurred to me. I knew that dear mother was very pious, most zealous of Roman Catholics, and I answered her with the breathless haste born of a deep emotion, —

"Oh, mamma! If you knew!"

"Knew what? Has anything happened?"

"The pope is dead."

"The pope is dead!" repeated my poor mother, and very pale she leaned against the wall.

I passed quickly into my own room, somewhat frightened at my success, and the enormity of the lie; and yet I had the courage to persist in it to the end. I still remember that subdued funereal evening; my father looked very grave, my mother was prostrated. They talked around the table in low voices. I kept my eyes lowered all the while; but my escapade had been so completely forgotten in the general sorrow that no one thought further of it.

Each one was pleased to call to mind some virtuous trait of that poor Pius IX.; then, by degrees, the conversation wandered, and reverted to Papal History. Aunt Rose began to speak of Pius VII., whom she recalled very well, having seen him when he passed through the Midi, in the back of a post-chaise, between gendarmes. They recalled that famous scene with the Emperor: *Comédiante!* . . . *tragédiante!* . . . For the hundredth time I heard them describe that terrible scene, ever with the same intonations, the same gestures, with all those stereotyped expressions which are a part of family tradition, as such bequeathed to the next generation, remaining with it, and like some monastic history, preserving all their puerilities and localisms.

Notwithstanding, the incident never appeared to me more interesting than upon this occasion.

With hypocritical sighs, with questionings, and an assumption of interest, I listened to every word, but all the time I was thinking to myself, —

"To-morrow morning, when they learn the pope is not dead, they will be so glad that no one will have the heart to scold me."

And as I thought of that, my eyes closed in spite of my efforts to keep them open, and visions of tiny boats, painted blue, appeared, and every nook along the Saône drowsing beneath the heat, and *argyronètes* darting forth their long feet in every direction, cutting the glassy water like diamond-points.

GASTRONOMIC SCENES.

BOUILLABAISSE.

WE were sailing along the Sardinian coast towards La Madeleine Island. It was an early morning excursion. Our oarsmen pulled slowly; leaning over the side of our boat, I looked at the sea, transparent as some spring, the sunlight diving to the very bottom. Medusæ and starfish sprawled among the seaweed. Big lobsters lay motionless, their long claws buried in the fine sand. All these might be seen at a depth of from eighteen to twenty feet, in a sort of aquarium, clear as crystal. At the bow of the boat a fisherman, standing with a long cleft reed in his hand, made a sign to the oarsmen, "Softly, softly!" and suddenly between the points of his fork he held a beautiful lobster suspended, spreading out its claws with a terrified movement, though still asleep. At my side another sailor let his line drop upon the water's surface in the wake of the boat, and brought in a haul of marvellous little fishes, which as they died were colored with a thousand bright and changing tints — a death-agony beheld through a prism.

The fishing ended, we landed among the high, gray rocks. A fire was quickly kindled, which

burned with a pale light in the bright sunshine; bread cut in big slices was placed upon small plates of red earthen-ware, and we sat about the soup-kettle, plates held out and nostrils distended. Was it because of the landscape, the sunshine, or that horizon of sea and sky? I have never eaten anything that tasted better than that lobster bouillabaisse. And afterwards that delightful siesta upon the sand, — a slumber filled with the lulling murmurs of the sea, while the wavelets, as if covered with innumerable shining scales, flash and glitter, even although the eyes are closed.

AIOLI.

ONE might have almost believed it to be the hut of some fisherman of Theocritus on the Sicilian coast; but the scene was merely in Provence, on the island of Camargue, the home of a river-keeper. A reed cabin, nets hanging upon the walls, guns, oars, apparently the tackle of a trapper, of one who hunts both on land and sea.

Before the open door, against which appeared a level landscape that seemed even vaster when the gale swept across it, the wife of the river-keeper was skinning some fine eels, which were still alive. The fish wriggled in the sunlight, and yonder, in the wan light of the squall, slender trees were bending like fugitives before the storm, the white surfaces of their leaves exposed. Bits of marsh,

gleaming here and there among the reeds, looked like fragments of a broken mirror. Farther away a long and shining line bounded the horizon. It was the Lake of Vaccarès.

Within the hut, a fire of twigs was burning brightly and crackling loudly; the keeper was religiously pounding cloves of garlic in a mortar, and adding olive-oil drop by drop. Later we ate *aioli* upon our eels, seated on high stools before a small wooden table, in that snug little cabin where the largest space of all was reserved for the ladder which climbed to the loft; and one felt that beyond and about that tiny room lay the horizon swept by the gale, and hurrying flocks of wandering birds, — that all the encircling space might be measured by the bells of herds, of horses and cattle, their ringing at first loud and sonorous, and then sounding more faintly in the distance, till the last notes were lost, borne away in a gust of the mistral.

COUSCOUS.

It was in Algeria; we were visiting an aga of the plain of Chélif; in the great magnificent tent pitched for us before the aga's house we watched the night descend, clad in hues of half-mourning, dark violet at first, which deepened into the purple of a magnificent sunset; through the freshness of the evening a Kabyle candlestick of palm-wood was lighted in the centre of the half-open

tent, and the motionless flame from its branches attracted night insects, who hovered about it with a rustling of timid wings. Squatted upon mats we ate in silence; whole sheep, all dripping in butter, were brought in at the end of poles, honeyed pastry and perfumed confections followed, and, last of all, a great wooden platter, upon which were chickens in the golden semolina of couscous.

Meanwhile night had fallen. Over the neighboring hills the moon was rising, a tiny Oriental crescent, near which a solitary star nestled. Out of doors a big bonfire was flaming in front of the tent, surrounded by dancers and musicians. I recall a gigantic negro, quite naked but for the ancient tunic of the light regiment; he jumped about, causing long shadows to dart all over the tent. This cannibal dance, those small Arabian drums, rattling breathlessly when the beat was hastened, the sharp barking of jackals responding from every side of the plain. — all these things made the observer feel that he was in a savage country. However, in the interior of the tent, that refuge of these nomadic tribes, which resembles a motionless sail upon a waveless sea, the aga in his white woollen burnouses, seemed to me an apparition of primitive times, and as he gravely swallowed his couscous, I was wondering whether this national Arabian dish were not indeed that miraculous manna of the Hebrews of which so much is written in the Bible.

POLENTA.

THE Corsican coast, an evening in November. We landed beneath torrents of rain, in a part of the country which was completely deserted. Some charcoal-burners of Lucca made room for us at their fire. Then a native shepherd, a species of savage, clad entirely in goatskins, invited us to eat *polenta* in his hut. We entered, stooping and making ourselves as small as possible, a hovel where it was impossible to stand upright. In the centre some bits of green wood are kindling, between four blackened stones. The smoke which escapes from this fire mounts towards a hole cut in the top of the hut; then it spreads everywhere, driven about by the wind and rain. A tiny lamp, the *caleil* of Provence, blinks timidly in this stifling atmosphere. A woman and children appear from time to time, when the smoke clears a little, and hidden away somewhere a pig is heard grunting. Some rubbish left from a shipwreck is seen, a bench made of bits of vessels, a wooden packing-case with lettering upon it, the painted wooden head of a mermaid torn from some prow, the paint washed away by the sea-water.

Polenta is frightful stuff. The badly crushed chestnuts have a mouldy taste; it would seem that they had remained too long under the trees during heavy rains. The national *bruccio* followed the *polenta*, with a wild taste reminding one of vagrant

goats. In this spot the very climax of Italian poverty is seen. Neither house nor home. The climate is so favorable, a livelihood so easily gained! Nothing more is needed than a retreat for rainy-weather days. And what does it matter that the place is smoky, that the lamp burns dimly, when a house is regarded merely as a prison, and the only life that seems life at all is lived in the open sunshine?

A SEA-SIDE HARVEST.

WE had been travelling across the plain since morning in quest of the sea, which constantly eluded us, in those winding paths, headlands, and peninsulas which form the coast of Britanny.

From time to time a bit of marine blue would appear on the horizon, like a patch of sky, though deeper in tint and less stable; but advancing along the capricious meanderings of those roads, which made one call up a picture of ambuscades and Chouan warfare, the momentary glimpse of the sea was soon shut out again. At length we arrived at a tiny village, rustic and ancient in appearance, with gloomy streets as narrow as if built in Algerian fashion, and full of dung, geese, cattle, and swine. The houses resembled huts, with their low arched doorways, encircled with white and marked with lime crosses; the shutters were firmly fastened by long transverse bars, a custom seen only in windswept countries. And yet this little Breton town looked sheltered enough; the air was still, and even stifling. One might have believed himself twenty leagues inland. But suddenly, as we came upon the square in front of the church, we found ourselves enveloped in a dazzling light, felt

a tremendous sweep of air, and in our ears was the sound of illimitable waves. The ocean spread before us, the immense, infinite ocean, with its salt, fresh scent, and that strong breeze which rises from each bounding wave as the tide comes in. The village rose before us, nestling along the edge of the quay, the main street continued by the jetty, till it reached a tiny port where fishing-boats were moored. Close to the waves the belfry of the church rises like a sentinel, and around it, at the very extremity of this bit of the world, is the cemetery with its crosses leaning forward, its wild waste-grass, and its low, crumbling wall, against which stone benches are placed.

It would be difficult to find a more delightful or secluded place than this little village hidden away in the midst of the rocks, and interesting both as a pastoral and a bit of marine landscape. All of them fishers or laborers, the people of the neighborhood have a rude, scarcely prepossessing exterior. They do not invite you to be their guest, quite the contrary. But by degrees they yield to humanizing influences, and you are surprised to find, in spite of their rough welcome, that these people are simple-hearted and kindly. They resemble their land, that stubborn and rocky soil, so mineral that the roads even, when exposed to the sun, have a blackish hue, sparkled with glittering particles of copper or of iron. This rocky soil along the coast, bare and exposed, looks wild, austere, and bracing. There are places where it has fallen down and caved in; there are perpendicular cliffs, gorges

hollowed out by the waves, which rush in engulfing them with a roar of waters. When the tide has gone out the rocks appear again, as far as the eye can see their monstrous backs emerging from the waves, glistening and white with foam, like gigantic cachalots run aground.

Only a few steps away from the water's edge, the scene affords a singular contrast; fields of wheat and lucerne, and vineyards extend, intersecting each other, separated by little walls as high as hedgerows, and green with brambles. The eye wearied even to dizziness at sight of those tall cliffs, those foaming breakers, those chasms into which one must descend with ropes fastened to the rocks, can find rest in the midst of the unbroken surface of the plain, and the friendlier, more familiar aspects of nature. The least detail of the rural scene is heightened when seen against the gray-green background of the sea, which presents itself at every turn of the road, and appears between the houses, through each cranny of a wall, and at the foot of the street. Even the crowing of the cock sounds clearer when surrounded by so much space. But what is most beautiful of all is the harvest-gathering at the sea-side, the golden stacks piled up so close to the blue waves, the threshing-floors where the rhythmic beat of the flail is heard, those groups of women on the steep rocks, seeking which way the wind blows, and winnowing the wheat between their outstretched hands with gestures of evocation. The grains rain down with a regular, brisk

movement, while the sea-breeze carries away the chaff and sets it whirling. This winnowing goes on upon the square in front of the church, upon the quay, as far as the jetty itself, where great fish-nets are spread out to dry, their meshes all entangled with aquatic plants.

Meanwhile there is another harvest at the foot of the rocks, in that neutral space invaded each day, and then left bare, by the tide. Here the seaweed is gathered. Each wave, as it breaks in foam upon the shore, leaves its traces in an undulating line of that marine vegetation known as *goëmon* or *varech*. When the wind blows, these algæ are carried the entire length of the beach with a rustling sound, and as far as the ebb of the sea leaves the rocks uncovered, these long, wet masses of sea-foliage are deposited everywhere. They are gathered into great heaps along the coast and piled up in dark-purplish stacks, which preserve all the hues of the waves, and the bizarre iris-tints of dead fishes and faded vegetation. When the stack is dry it is burned, and the soda is extracted from it.

This singular harvest is gathered by the bare-legged villagers at low tide among the innumerable limpid little pools which the ebbing waters leave behind; men, women, and children appear among the slippery rocks, armed with immense rakes. As they pass, terrified crabs attempt to escape, crawl into hiding-places, spreading out their claws, and shrimps with transparent bodies can scarcely be distinguished from the ruffled water. After the seaweed is obtained, it is gath-

ered into piles and loaded upon wagons to which yoked oxen are harnessed; they cross the hilly and broken ground laboriously, with heads bent. Wherever the eye chances to glance, these wagons are seen; sometimes in spots that seem almost inaccessible, which are reached only by abrupt paths, a man will appear leading by the bridle a horse loaded with drooping, dripping vegetation. You will also see children carrying upon sticks, crossed to form a handbarrow, their gleanings from this marine harvest.

All this forms a melancholy but fascinating picture. Terrified sea-gulls are seen circling about their eggs, and screaming. The menace of the sea is here, and what adds a final touch of solemnity to the scene is the silence which broods about everything, the same silence that marks a gleaning of the fruits of the soil, the silence of activity, full of the efforts of a people struggling against rebellious and parsimonious nature. A call to the cattle, a sharp "t-r-r-r" echoing through the grottos, is the only sound that is heard. The spectator seems to have encountered some Trappist community, one of those monastic brotherhoods which labor in the open air with a vow of everlasting silence imposed upon them. Those who are directing the work never look about, even to so much as glance at you when you pass; the cattle alone fix their great, placid eyes upon you. And yet this is not a sad people, and when the Sabbath comes they know how to make merry, and dance their old Breton dances. Of an evening, towards eight o'clock, they assemble at

the end of the quay, before the church and the cemetery. That word "cemetery" has a dismal sound, but the spot itself, if you should see it, looks anything but dismal. Not a boxwood-tree, nor a single yew, nor monuments of marble; nothing here is formal or solemn. Only crosses are seen, the same names repeated again and again as in all small settlements where the inhabitants are closely allied. The tall grass grows everywhere with equal favor, and the walls are so low that the children can climb over them in their play, and upon the day of an interment the spectator from without can see the kneeling mourners within.

At the foot of those low walls the aged come to sit in the sun, spinning or dozing, upon one side of them that wild and silent enclosure, in front of them the eternal and restless sea.

And there, too, the young gather to dance of a Sabbath evening. When the light gleams faintly above the waves along the jetty, groups of youths and maids approach. Rings are formed, and a shrill voice rises, at first alone, repeating a line whose rhythm is easily caught, and summoning the chorus: —

"C'est dans la cour du Plat-d'Étain."

All the voices repeat together, —

"C'est dans la cour du Plat-d'Etain."

The roundel grows livelier, one catches glimpses of white caps, their flaps whirling about like butter-

flies' wings. Almost invariably the wind snatches and bears off half of the words, —

". . . perdu mon serviteur . . .
. . . portera mes couleurs . . ."

the song all the more naïve and charming, because one catches only fragments of it, with those odd elisions so common in folk-songs set to dance-tunes with more regard for the rhythm of the measure than thought for the meaning of the words. With no other light than the feeble ray of the moon, the dance seems fantastic. All is gray, black, or white, in that neutrality of tint which accompanies things dreamed about, not seen. By degrees, as the moon rises, the crosses in the cemetery, especially that of High Calvary, which is at one side, lengthen till they seem to touch the ring of dancers and mingle with them. At last ten o'clock rings. The dancers separate. Each returns homeward, along the lanes of the little village, which wears a strange aspect at this moment, with its broken steps of outer staircases, roof corners, and a confused mass of bent, tumble-down, open sheds, black with the dense gloom of night.

We pass along old walks, just grazed by fig trees, and, as we walk on, crushing underfoot the empty chaff from the winnowed wheat, the scent of the sea comes to us, mingling with the warm perfume of the harvest, and the breath of cattle asleep in the stables.

The house where we are living is in the country,

a short distance from the village. As we return, we can see along the road, just above the hedges, beacons gleaming from all parts of the peninsula, a flash-light, a revolving, a stationary one; and as we cannot now see the ocean, all these watch-towers rising above yonder black reefs seem lost in this peaceful country.

THE EMOTIONS OF A YOUNG RED PARTRIDGE.

YOU know that partridges travel in flocks, and make their nests together in the hollows of the fields, so that they may be able to disappear at the least alarm, an entire flock dispersing like a handful of wheat scattered by the sower. Our own covey is large in numbers, and merry; our home is upon the plain on the border of a great forest, well sheltered on two sides, and full of booty. Ever since I knew how to run, being well fed and full-fledged, my life was a very happy one. But one thing disturbed me somewhat, and that was the famous beginning of the chase; our parents began to talk of it among themselves, in whispers; a veteran of our company would tell me on such occasions, —

"Do not fear, Rouget," — I was named Rouget because of my bill, and my legs the color of the red berries of the rowan, — "do not fear, Rouget. I will take you with me the day the hunt begins, and I am sure no ill will befall you." He was an old fellow, very sly, and still nimble, although he had the horseshoe already marked upon his breast, and a few white feathers here and there. When he was young he received a grain of lead in one wing,

that what I saw was feathers, and in fact, a hundred feet in front of us we saw a superb young gray partridge fall in the furrows, his bleeding head upturned. When the sun was high and the heat intense, the firing suddenly paused. The huntsmen returned towards the little house, where a fine fire of twigs was soon burning. They talked among themselves, guns slung across their shoulders, arguing about their shots, while the dogs followed close at their heels, exhausted, their tongues hanging.

"They are going to dine," said my companion; "let us do the same."

And we entered a field of buckwheat which is close to the woods, a big field dark in places, white in others, partly in flower, partly gone to seed, and scented like almond. Beautiful pheasants with reddish-brown plumage were pecking there as well as ourselves, dropping their red crests lest they should be seen. Ah! they were not so valiant as of old. As they ate they asked us for news, and wished to learn whether any of their kin had fallen. Meanwhile the meal of the sportsmen, at first silent, became more and more boisterous; we could hear glasses clinking and the corks of bottles flying. My old comrade thought it was time to seek our covert again.

At this hour the forest seemed as if asleep. The little pool where the roebucks come to drink was not troubled by a single tongue lapping the water. Not even the snout of a rabbit in the wild thyme of the warren. Only a mysterious shudder

was felt, as if every leaf, every grass-blade, sheltered an existence that was endangered. These hunted ones of the forest have so many hiding-places in burrows, thickets, fagots, and brushwood; and then there are those ditches, those tiny ditches in the woods, that hold the water so long after a rain. I confess that I would gladly have sought one of those holes, but my companion preferred not to remain in hiding, but to have the country before him, able to look far and wide in the open air. It was lucky for us, for soon the huntsmen arrived in the woods.

Oh! that first shot in the forest, that fire which pierced the leaves like an April hail-storm, denting the bark of the trees. Never shall I forget it. A rabbit scampered across the road, tearing off tufts of grass with his paws. A squirrel tumbled down a chestnut tree, the still green chestnuts tumbling with him. The heavy flight of some big pheasants was heard, and a tumult ensued in the low branches, among the dry leaves, at the shock of this fire, which startled, awoke, and frightened every living thing in the woods. Field-mice ran out of their holes. A stag-beetle crawled from a crevice in the tree where we were crouching, and rolled his big stupid eyes, fixed with terror. Blue dragon-flies, humble-bees, butterflies, tiny creatures of all sorts fled terrified in every direction. A little cricket with scarlet wings even went so far as to crawl close to my beak, but I was too frightened myself to take advantage of its terror.

But my old comrade remained calm. Constantly

attentive to the firing and the barking of the dogs, when they came nearer he would signal to me, and we would withdraw a little, beyond reach of the dogs and well-hidden in the foliage. And yet, on one occasion I really believed that we were lost. The passage we must cross was guarded at every step by a hunter lying in wait. On one side stood a big, determined, black-whiskered fellow, whose every movement set a mass of old iron ringing; he was armed with a hunting-knife, cartridge-pouch, powder-box, and with high-buttoned gaiters reaching to his knees, making him look even taller; on the other side a little old man leaning against a tree, tranquilly smoking a pipe, blinking his eyes as if he wished to doze. He did not frighten me in the least; it was the big fellow who terrified me.

"You know nothing at all, Rouget," said my comrade, with a smile; and advancing fearlessly with outspread wings, he flew past, almost touching the legs of the terrible black-whiskered huntsman.

And the fact is, the poor man was so encumbered with his hunting-rig, so absorbed in admiring himself from top to toe, that when he aimed his gun, we were already beyond his range. Ah! if the huntsman only knew, when he thinks himself alone in a corner of the woods, how many tiny, fixed eyes are watching from every bush, how many tiny, pointed bills are trying to hold in their laughter at his awkwardness!

We went on and on. Having nothing better to do than to follow my comrade, my wings fluttered

to every motion of his own, and folded silently when he alighted. I can still see every place we passed — the warren, pink with heath, full of burrows at the foot of the yellow trees, and then that great curtain of oaks where I seemed to see death concealed everywhere, the little green lane where Mother Partridge had so often walked with her tiny brood in the May sunshine, where we hopped about, pecking at the red ants that clambered up our legs, and where we met snobbish little pheasants, dull as chickens, who would not play with us.

I see, as if in a dream, that little lane at the moment a roe would cross it, erect upon her slender legs, her eyes wide open, her body ready to spring. And then there was that pool we visited in parties of fifteen to thirty, all of the same flock, passing across the plain in a minute to drink the water of the spring and splash its droplets which rolled down our lustrous plumage. In the midst of this pond there was a clump of young alders, that formed quite a thicket, and upon that little island we took refuge. The dogs must have had a keen scent to have come there in search of us. We had been there a moment when a roebuck arrived dragging three legs along, and leaving a red track upon the moss behind him. It was such a sad sight that I hid my head beneath the leaves; but I could hear the wounded animal drinking in the pool, panting and consumed with fever.

The sun was setting. The firing sounded at a distance now, the shots few and far between. At length there was silence. The day's hunt was over.

Then we returned very softly across the plain for news of our covey. As we passed by the little wooden house, I saw a horrible sight.

On the edge of a ditch, russet-coated hares and little, gray, white-tailed rabbits were lying side by side. Their tiny paws, bent together in death, seemed to beg for mercy; their dim eyes seemed about to weep; we saw red partridges also, and gray ones, who had a horseshoe marked upon their breasts, like my comrade, and young ones of this year's brood, who like myself still had down upon their wings. Do you know any sadder sight in the world than a dead bird? What seems more alive than the wings of a bird? But to see them folded and cold causes one to shudder. There was also a huge roebuck lying there; it was a magnificent animal, and lay there quietly, as if it had fallen asleep, its little red tongue outstretched as if about to lick.

The huntsmen too were there, leaning over all this slaughtered booty, counting and drawing towards their game-bags broken wings and bleeding legs, with no respect for those wounds, still fresh. The dogs, tied-up to go back, were scowling and pointing, as if ready to spring again into the thicket.

Oh! while that great sun was sinking yonder, as they went off wearily, casting long shadows upon the clods and the paths wet with the evening-dews, how I cursed, how I hated them, men and brutes, that entire band. Neither my companion nor myself had the heart for piping our usual farewell note to the departing day.

Upon our way we came across more unfortunate little beasts, slain by a chance bullet, and lying there, abandoned to ants and field-mice, their muzzles full of dust; we saw magpies and swallows, suddenly struck in their flight; they lay head up, upon the ground, and their little claws curled stiffly upward, while the night descended swiftly, — an autumn night, clear, cold, and damp. And more heart-rending than aught else were the cries which rose from the outskirts of the woods, from deep in the meadow, from the willows fringing the river, calls that were uttered far and wide, sad anxious cries which no call answered.

THE MIRROR.

IN the North, on the bank of the Niemen, appeared one day a little creole, fifteen years of age, pink and white as the blossoms of the almond tree. She had come from the land of humming-birds, and a breath of love wafted her hither. True, the people of her island had said to her, "Do not go. It is cold on the continent. When winter comes it will kill you." But the little creole did not believe there was such a thing as winter, and she did not know what cold was except as she had tasted it in sherbets; besides, she was in love, and had no fear of death. And so it happened that she landed northward, among the fogs of the Niemen, with her fans, her hammock, mosquito-nettings, and a gilded, latticed cage, filled with the birds of her country.

When old Father North saw this island-flower the South had sent him in a sunbeam, his heart stirred within him for pity; and as he thought that the cold would make but a single mouthful of the maiden and her humming-birds, he quickly lighted his great yellow sun, and disguised himself in summer's garment to receive the strangers. And so the creole was deceived, and she mistook this

northern heat, so harsh and oppressive, for constant warmth, and its dark evergreen for the verdure of spring-time, and hanging her hammock in the park between two fir trees she swung and fanned herself all day long.

"It is very warm in the North," she said with a smile. But one thing troubled her. Why in this strange country have the houses no verandas? Why those thick walls, those carpets and heavy hangings? Those great porcelain stoves, and huge piles of wood heaped up in the yards, those blue fox-skins, lined cloaks, and furs laid away at the bottom of wardrobes, — what are all these things for? Poor child, she will soon learn.

One morning, on awaking, the little creole feels a sudden chill pass through her. The sun has disappeared, and from the darkened overhanging sky, which seems to have descended upon the earth during the preceding night, flakes are falling, forming a woolly covering, white and silent as that which falls from the cotton tree. Winter is come! Winter is come! The wind whistles, the stoves roar. In their big cage with its gilded lattice, the humming-birds chirp no longer. Their tiny wings, blue, rose-hued, ruby-red, and sea-green, are motionless now. It is pitiful to see them huddling against each other, their bodies benumbed and swollen with the cold, — such slender beaks, and eyes like pin-heads. Yonder, in the park, frost has eaten into the hammock, and it, too, shivers with the cold. The branches of the pine tree are sheathed in a covering that looks like spun glass. The little creole

[redacted]

Growing ever shorter, ever gloomier, the winter days follow each other. Surrounded by her lace curtains, the little creole droops, is wretched. What saddens her most of all is to find that from her bed she cannot see the fire. It seems to her that she has lost her country a second time. From time to time she asks, "Is there a fire in the room?" "Why, of course there is, little one. The fireplace is aflame! Don't you hear the logs crackling, the fir-cones bursting? — Oh, look, look!" But though she leans forward, the flames are too far away for her; she cannot see them, and the thought renders her disconsolate. But one evening, as she lies there, pensive and pale, her head barely touching her pillow, and her eyes ceaselessly directed towards that beautiful invisible flame, her beloved approaches her bedside, and lifts one of the mirrors lying upon the bed: "You want to see the flame, *mignonne?* Well, then, wait a moment," and kneeling before the fire, he tries to hold the mirror so that she shall receive a reflection of the magic flame. "Can you see it?" "No! I see nothing." — "How now?" "I cannot see it yet." Then suddenly receiving full upon her face a flash of light that envelops her, "Oh, I see it!" cries the creole, overjoyed, and she dies with a smile on her lips, two tiny flames leaping from the depths of her eyes.

THE BLIND EMPEROR, OR A JOURNEY IN BAVARIA IN SEARCH OF A JAPANESE TRAGEDY.

I.

COLONEL VON SIEBOLDT.

IN the spring of 1866, Colonel Sieboldt, a Bavarian in the service of Holland, well known in the scientific world through his charming works upon the Japanese flora, came to Paris to submit to the Emperor a vast project for an international association for the exploitation of that marvellous Nipon-Jepon-Japon (Land of the Rising Sun), where he had resided for thirty years. While awaiting an audience in the Tuileries, the illustrious traveller, who had remained decidedly Bavarian in spite of his sojourn in Japan, passed his evenings in a little beer-shop of the Faubourg Poissonnière, in company with a young lady of Munich who travelled with him, and whom he introduced as his niece. There it was I first ran across him. The physiognomy of this tall old man, erect and sturdy in spite of his sixty-two years, his long white beard, his interminable fur-lined coat, its button-hole decked with ribbons of various colors presented by divers academies of science, his foreign manner, in which

there were at once timidity and boldness, his whole appearance was sufficient to cause all eyes to turn in his direction whenever he entered. The colonel would seat himself solemnly, and draw from his pocket a big black radish; then the little lady who accompanied him, decidedly German in the cut of her short skirt, her fringed shawl, and her little tourist's-hat, would proceed to cut that radish in thin slices after the fashion of her country, cover it with salt, and offer it to her "*ouncle*," as she called him in her thin voice, as small as a mouse's, and both of them would begin to nibble, sitting *vis-à-vis*, tranquilly, and with perfect simplicity, without the slightest suspicion that to behave in Paris exactly as if in Munich might cause ridicule. Truly this was an original and sympathetic couple, and it did not take long for us to become great friends. The worthy man, perceiving how well inclined I was to listen when he talked of Japan, asked me to revise his Memoir, and I hastened to accept the task, prompted as much by regard for this aged Sinbad as by the desire to plunge more deeply into the study of that beautiful country, for which he had communicated his own love to me. This labor of revision was by no means a light one. The entire Memoir was written in the same bizarre French that Colonel Sieboldt spoke.

"*Si j'aurais des actionnaires, — si je réunirais des fonds*," and those blunders of pronunciation which made him say regularly, "*Les grandes boites de l'Asie*," for "*Les grandes poëtes de l'Asie*," and "*le Chabon*" for "*le Japon*." Add to this, many

of his phrases were fifty lines in length, without a period, a single comma, nowhere a breathing-place, — and yet the whole so well arranged in the brain of the author that to omit a single word seemed to him impossible; if it occurred to me to cut out a line, he very quickly transferred it to another place.

Notwithstanding, this terrible man was so interesting with his *Chabon* that I forgot to be tired while I labored, and when the letter arrived granting an audience, the Memoir was already fairly well in shape.

Poor old Sieboldt! I can still see him walking towards the Tuileries, all his crosses upon his breast, in his uniform with that fine colonel's coat of scarlet and gold, which he brought from his trunk only upon great occasions. In spite of his oft-repeated "brum, brum," as he straightened his tall figure again and again, as I felt his arm tremble against mine, and noted the unusual pallor of his nose, the fine, big nose of a scientist, crimsoned by study and the beer of Munich, I knew that he was deeply moved. That evening, when I saw him again, he was triumphant. Napoleon III. had received him between two doors, listened for five minutes, and dismissed him with that favorite phrase, "I will see. I will consider." As result of which, the naïve Japanese was already talking of renting the first story of the Grand Hôtel, writing to the journals, and issuing a prospectus. I had great difficulty in making him understand that his Majesty's reflections might require some time, and that meanwhile it would be better to return to

Munich, where Parliament had just voted funds for the purchase of his great collection. My remarks finally convinced him, and on his departure he promised me, in return for the trouble I had taken with his famous Memoir, a Japanese tragedy of the sixteenth century, entitled *The Blind Emperor*, a precious masterpiece, absolutely unknown in Europe, and translated by him expressly for his friend Meyerbeer. The master was about to write the music for the choruses at the time of his death. You perceive that the gift the good man wished to make me was a valuable one.

Unfortunately, some days after his departure, war broke out in Germany, and I heard nothing more of my tragedy. The Prussians having invaded Würtemberg and Bavaria, it was quite natural, in his patriotic excitement and the confusion attending an invasion, that the colonel should have forgotten my *Blind Emperor*. But I thought of it myself more than ever, and — I confess — partly stirred by a longing for my Japanese tragedy, partly moved by curiosity to see what war and invasion at close range were like, — O ye gods! how the horror of it all remains in my memory, — I decided one fine morning to set out for Munich.

II.

SOUTH GERMANY.

TALK of your phlegmatic nations! In the midst of war and burning beneath that intense

August sun, all the country beyond the Rhine, from the bridge of Kehl to Munich itself, — how tranquil and cold it all seemed. Through the thirty windows of the Würtemberg car, which took me slowly, sluggishly across Swabia, landscape after landscape was unrolled, mountains, ravines, masses of rich verdure, which suggested the presence of refreshing streams. Upon many a slope which would disappear as the train moving on passed through some wind of the road, peasant-girls were seen, standing stiffly in the midst of their cattle, clad in red petticoats and velvet bodices, and the trees around them were so green that one might almost fancy he saw a miniature landscape taken from one of those tiny fir-boxes fragrant with the resinous odors of Northern forests. Now and then we would see a dozen foot-soldiers, clad in green, covering step in a meadow, heads erect, legs raised, bearing their guns as if they were cross-bows, perhaps the army of some Nassau prince. Sometimes other trains passed, as slowly as our own, loaded with big boats, where the Würtemberg soldiery, huddled as if in some allegoric chariot, sang three-part barcarolles as they fled before the Prussians. There were halts at every refreshment-station, and one saw major-domos with rigid smiles, and those fat, good-natured faces, napkins tucked under their chins, standing before enormous hunches of meat, served with sweetmeats; then came the royal Park of Stuttgard, full of coaches, toilets, cavalcades, waltz-music playing about the fountains, quadrilles while a battle was in progress at Kissingen. Really,

when I recall all this, and think of what I saw four years later in that same mouth of August, locomotives madly rushing no one knew where, as if the great sun itself had bewitched their boilers, railroad cars pulling up on the very battlefield, rails cut, trains in distress, France reduced day by day, as the Eastern Line grew shorter and shorter, — all along the route abandoned tracks, and a dismal assemblage of railway-stations, which were left in their loneliness, in a deserted land full of wounded men, forgotten like so much luggage — I begin to believe that the war between Prussia and the Southern States was but a sham war after all, and that, in spite of all which could be told us, the German wolves do not devour each other.

To see Munich was to be convinced of this. The evening when I arrived, a beautiful Sunday evening, the sky thick with stars, all the city was out of doors. A vague, joyous rumor was floating in the air, as indistinct beneath the light, as dust raised by the footsteps of all these promenaders. In the cool, vaulted beer-cellars, in the beer-gardens where colored lanterns swayed to and fro with a dim light, everywhere was heard, mingling with the noise of the covers of beer-mugs dropping heavily, the sound of brass and wood instruments, uttering triumphal notes. It was in one of these harmonic beer-shops I discovered Colonel Sieboldt, seated with his niece, before that everlasting black radish of his.

At a side-table, the Minister of Foreign Affairs was drinking bock in company with the king's

uncle. All around us were seated the worthy citizens of Munich with their families, officers in spectacles, students wearing little caps, red, blue, and sea-green; all were grave and silent, and listened religiously to Herr Gungl's orchestra, as they watched the clouds of smoke rising from their pipes, with no more concern about Prussia than if it did not exist. The colonel seemed slightly disturbed when he saw me, and I believe that he lowered his voice perceptibly when he addressed me in French. Around us were whispers of "*Frantzose! Frantzose!*" and I could feel the ill-will every glance conveyed. "Let us go," said Colonel Sieboldt, and once we were outside, his smile was as frank as of old. The worthy man had not forgotten his promise, but he had been very much absorbed in the arrangement of his Japanese collection, which he had sold to the State. That was the reason why he had not written. As for my tragedy, it was at Wurtzbourg, in the hands of Frau von Sieboldt, and to reach that place it was necessary to obtain a special permission from the French Embassy, for the Prussians were approaching Wurtzbourg, and it was now very difficult to gain entry. But I had so strong a desire to obtain my *Blind Emperor* that I would have gone to the Embassy that very evening had I not feared that M. de Trévise would have gone to bed.

III.

IN A DROSKY.

EARLY the following morning, the landlord of the *Grappe-Bleue* persuaded me to climb to the top of one of those small conveyances which stand in hotel-courtyards, and can always be hired by travellers who wish to be shown the curiosities of the city, from which equipage monuments and avenues appear exactly as if you had encountered them upon the pages of a guide-book. On this occasion the city was not to be shown to me, but I was to be conducted to the French Embassy, "Frantzsosiche Ambassad!" the hotel-keeper repeated twice. The coachman, a little man in blue livery, a gigantic hat upon his head, seemed much astonished at the new destination of his fiacre, or his *droschken*, as they call it in Munich. But I was even more astounded than he when I saw him turn his back upon the noble quarter where we were, and enter a poorer part of the city, which for a long distance was lined with factories, working-men's lodgings, and tiny gardens; then he passed beyond the gates and out of the city.

"*Ambassad Frantzsosiche?*" I asked uneasily from time to time.

"*Ya, Ya,*" answered the little man, and we rolled on and on. I would have gladly received further information, but what the deuce was to be done?

My guide could not speak French, and I myself at this epoch knew only two or three phrases of the German language, very elementary ones at that, which related merely to bread, bed, meat, and had naught to do with such words as "ambassador." And even these few words I could only deliver set to music, and this is the reason: —

Some years before, with a comrade almost as mad as myself, I had travelled across Alsace, Switzerland, and the Duchy of Baden, — a real *colporteur's* journey, knapsacks strapped upon our shoulders, striding across the country, a dozen leagues at a stretch, turning aside from the cities, of which we wished to see nothing more than the gates, following each tiny by-way, never knowing whither it would lead us. Often the result would be that we had to pass a night, unexpectedly, in the open field, or in some barn whose roof was the sky, but what made our journeys still more eventful was the fact that neither of us knew a single word of German. By the aid of a little pocket-dictionary purchased as we were passing through Basle, we had been able to construct a few extremely simple phrases, quite naïve in character, such as "*Vir vollen trinken Bier*," "We want beer to drink," "*Vir vollen essen Käse*," "We want some cheese to eat." Unfortunately, though they may not seem at all complex to you, it cost us much labor to retain these accursed phrases. We did not, in the comedian's language, "have them at our tongue's end." Then it occurred to us that we would set them to music, and the little air we had

composed was so well adapted to the purpose that the words entered our heads along with the notes, and it was impossible to utter these phrases without dragging along the music. It was indeed a sight, to see the expression on the face of the Baden inn-keepers, when of an evening we would enter the great hall of the Gasthaus, and immediately our knapsacks were unbuckled chant in resonant voices: —

"Vir vollen trinken Bier (repeat),
Vir vollen, ya, vir vollen,
Ya!
Vir vollen trinken Bier."

Since that time I have become most proficient in German; I have had so many opportunities to learn the language. My vocabulary has been enriched by a host of expressions and phrases; but I *say* them, I sing them no longer! Ah, no! I have not the least wish to sing them.

But to return to my *droschken.*

We went at a slow trot down an avenue bordered with trees and white houses. Suddenly the coachman paused. "*Da*," he said pointing out to me a little white house, hidden among the acacias, which seemed to me somewhat secluded and quiet for an embassy. Three copper knobs, one above the other, gleamed in a corner of the wall beside the door. I pulled the first one I chanced to touch; the door opened, and I entered an elegant and comfortable vestibule, flowers and carpets everywhere. On the staircase half a dozen Bavarian

chambermaids came running to answer my ring, standing in line, with that awkward appearance of birds without wings that characterizes all the women beyond the Rhine.

I inquired, "*Ambassad Frantzosiche?*" They made me repeat this twice, and then began to laugh, so loudly that they shook the banister. I returned to my coachman furious, and endeavored to make him understand, with an abundance of gestures, that he was mistaken, and the Embassy was not there. "*Ya, ya,*" responded the little man, without the slightest show of emotion, and we returned toward Munich.

I must believe that our ambassador then at Munich changed his domicile very frequently, or else my coachman, unwilling to depart from custom with regard to his *droschken*, was determined I should see, if possible, the city and its environs. At all events, our entire morning was passed in driving over Munich in every direction, in search of that fantastic Embassy. After two or three attempts I ended by refusing to descend from the carriage. The coachman went in search, returned, stopped in certain streets, and appeared to ask information. I allowed myself to be driven on, no longer occupied except in looking about me. What a wearisome, cold city, this Munich, with its great avenues, its rows of palaces, its over-sized streets, where every footstep resounds, its open-air museum of Bavarian celebrities, who seem so very dead as one glances at their effigies in white marble.

What colonnades, arcades, frescos, obelisks,

Greek temples, propylæa, with distichs in golden letters upon their frontons! So much effort at grandeur; but one cannot help feeling the emptiness and pomposity of it all, finding at the end of each avenue a triumphal arch where the horizon alone passes, and porticos open to the blue sky. So I picture to myself those imaginary cities, Italy mingling with Germany, where Musset parades the incurable ennui of his Fantasio and the solemn, stupid, bewigged head of the Prince of Mantua.

This drive in the *droschken* lasted five or six hours, at the end of which time the coachman brought me back triumphantly to the courtyard of the *Grappe-Bleue*, cracking his whip, quite proud to have shown me Munich. As for the Embassy, I finally found it two streets from my hotel; but it did me little good, for the chancellor was unwilling to give me a passport for Wurtzbourg. It seems that we were not very favorably regarded in Bavaria at this time; it would have been dangerous for a Frenchman to venture beyond the outposts. I was consequently obliged to wait in Munich until Frau von Sieboldt should find occasion to send me the Japanese tragedy.

IV.

THE BLUE COUNTRY.

SINGULAR fact! These worthy Bavarians, who bore us so much ill-will because we did not espouse their cause in this war, felt not the least animosity

towards the Prussians, — neither shame at defeat, nor hatred for their conqueror. "They are the finest soldiers in the world," the landlord of the *Grappe-Bleue* said to me with a certain pride the morning of Kissingen, and that was the general sentiment in Munich. In the cafés there was a rush for the Berlin newspapers, and side-splitting laughter at the pleasantries of *Kladderadatsch*, those heavy Berlin jests, as ponderous as that famous pile-hammer of the Krupp factory, which weighs fifty thousand kilogrammes. As every one was certain that the Prussians would soon enter the city, all were disposed to receive them well. The beer-shops laid in special supplies of sausages and meat-balls, and houses in the city began to prepare chambers for the officers.

Only the museums manifested some uneasiness. One day, upon entering the Pinakothek, I saw that the walls were bare, and the guardians of the place busied in nailing away the paintings in great packing-cases, ready to be sent to the South. It was feared that the conquerors, extremely scrupulous regarding personal property, would not be quite so respectful of the collections of the State, and of all the museums of the city, only Colonel Sieboldt's remained open. In his capacity as a Dutch officer, decorated with the Eagle of Prussia, the colonel felt assured that none would dare touch his collection, and while awaiting the arrival of the Prussians he merely walked back and forth in full uniform through the three long halls which the king had given him, fronting upon the court-garden, a sort

of Palais-Royal, but greener and gloomier than ours, surrounded by cloistered walls painted in fresco.

In that great, dismal palace, that exhibition of curiosities, all carefully labelled, did indeed form a museum, a melancholy assemblage of things come from far-away lands, and snatched from the sphere in which they belonged. And old Sieboldt himself seemed to form part of the collection. I went to see him every day, and together we passed long hours turning over the leaves of those Japanese manuscripts ornamented with plates, those scientific and historic works, the former so immense that it was necessary to spread them out upon the floor in order to open them, the others about as long as a finger-nail, legible only with the aid of a magnifying-glass, gilded, exquisitely done, and very valuable. Herr von Sieboldt aroused my admiration with his Japanese encyclopædia in eighty-two volumes, and even translated for me an ode of *Hiak-nin*, a marvellous work, published under the supervision of the Emperors of Japan, and containing the biographies, portraits, and lyric fragments of one hundred of the most famous poets of the Empire. Then we arranged his collection of armor, golden helmets with huge chin-pieces, cuirasses, coats of mail, great two-handed swords, which suggested the days of Knight-templars, and with which a body could be ripped open so easily.

He explained, too, the amorous devices painted upon gilded shells, introduced me to Japanese interiors, showing me the model of his house at Yedo, a lacquered miniature where everything

was represented, from the silken window-shades to the rock-work of the garden, a Lilliputian garden, decorated with tiny plants and indigenous flora. But more than anything else I was interested in those objects of Japanese worship, those tiny, painted, wooden gods, chasubles, consecrated vases, portative chapels, veritable *japanni* theatres, which every faithful worshipper has in some corner of his house. Tiny red idols are placed in the rear. A slender knotted cord hangs in front of them. Before commencing his prayer, the son of Japan bows, and by means of this cord strikes a bell which shines at the foot of the altar. It is thus he attracts the attention of his gods. I took a childish pleasure in ringing these magic bells, and allowing my fancy to wander, carried onward by that wave of sound, even to the heart of those Oriental Asias where the rising sun seems to have gilded all things, from the blades of great swords to the edges of tiny books.

When I left the museum my eyes were still filled with all those reflections of lacquer and jade, and the brilliant coloring of geographical charts, especially on the days when the colonel had read to me one of those Japanese odes, of a poetic form both chaste and distinguished, original and profound, the streets of Munich produced a singular effect upon me. Japan and Bavaria were countries entirely new to me, both of which I became acquainted with at the same time, depending on the latter for my knowledge of the former; the two were mingled confused, in my brain, until they

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warmed by the sun, enveloped me in an oppressive heat, and I was obliged to descend again very quickly. Nevertheless, I was there long enough to know thee, O mighty Bavaria! big-voiced and grandiloquent. I have seen thy chest without a heart, thy huge arms, like those of some singer, puffy and without muscles, thy sword of wrought metal, and I have discovered in thy hollow head the foul drunkenness and torpor of the beer-drinker's brain. And to think that, in embarking upon that mad war of 1870, our diplomats counted upon thee! Ah! if they too had only taken the trouble to ascend Bavaria.

VI

THE BLIND EMPEROR.

I had been ten days at Munich without receiving the slightest news of my tragedy. I had begun to despair when one evening at the little beer-garden where we were taking our meals, I saw my friend appear with a radiant countenance. "I have it," he said. "Come to-morrow morning to the museum. We will read it together; you shall see for yourself how fine it is." He was very animated that evening. His eyes sparkled as he spoke. He declaimed quite loudly whole passages of the tragedy, trying to sing the choruses. Two or three times his niece was obliged to make some

of marble columns whose projecting angles form three sides of a square, arranged upon consoles, are the busts of electors, kings, generals, jurisconsults, etc. A catalogue may be obtained in the custodian's room.

Slightly in front rises a colossal statue, Bavaria herself, ninety feet high, standing at the summit of one of those great gloomy staircases which are open to the air on all sides, and rise in the midst of verdurous public gardens. With a lion-skin upon her shoulders, her sword clenched in one hand, in the other the crown of Fame (*Fame* always!) this immense bronze figure, at the hour when I saw it, towards the close of one of those August days when the shadows lengthen enormously, filled the silent plain with its emphatic gesture. All around, a stretch of columns, and profiles of celebrated men grimacing in the setting sun. The scene was so deserted, so dismal! And as I heard the sound of my own footsteps echoing upon the flaggings, there returned to me again that impression of emptiness and grandeur combined which had pursued me since the moment of my arrival in Munich.

Through the interior of Bavaria runs a little winding, cast-iron staircase. The whim seized me, and I climbed to the very top and seated myself for a moment in the head of the colossus, a tiny rotunda-like room, lighted by two windows which formed the eyes of Bavaria. In spite of those open eyes facing the blue horizon of the Alps, it was very hot in that little room. The bronze,

little "*oncle*." Colonel Sieboldt had died su denly in the night.

I left Munich the same evening, not having th heart to disturb so much sorrow merely for th sake of a literary fantasy, and so it was that I nev knew more of that marvellous Japanese tragec than the mere title: *The Blind Emperor!* Sin that day we have seen another tragedy enacted f which that title imported from Germany wou have been most appropriate; sinister indeed was, but not Japanese, that tragedy full of blo and tears.

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